

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**CHALLENGES IN SUMMARY WRITING: A CASE STUDY OF  
BOLGATANGA GIRLS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



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**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics,  
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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

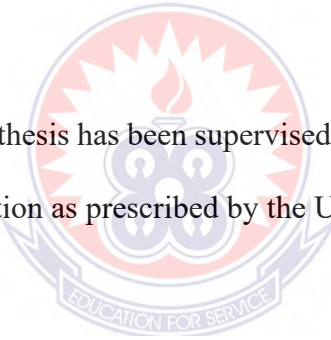
I, ATEELIYAH, RICHARD APUUSIYAH, hereby, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references that are contained in works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is unreservedly my original work and has never been presented either in part or in full for any other degree elsewhere.

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### Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this thesis has been supervised by me according to the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as prescribed by the University of Education, Winneba.



SUPERVISOR'S NAME:

DR. KWAKU OFORI

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely and supportive wife (Martina Ateeliah Azanoore), my children (Ida Atoebase Ateeliah, Ethel Awunsina Ateeliah, Shadrach Ataripoora Ateeliah and Fidelis Akanguwine Ateeliah).



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## ABSTRACT

Summary writing is basically the reduction of a text that is centred on the salient points of a text and a resulting restatement. It is an activity that is multi-sectoral as it involves an interplay of identification of central ideas, a carefully organized form of a text as well as the capability to combine a brief, concise and a well-connected frame of ideas representing the author's original thoughts or emotions. Students, for that matter candidates, have battled with this canker which has mostly caused poor performance in their course of climbing the academic ladder. This has precipitated the identification of the different forms of difficulties that learners in the study area faced as they undertook a summary writing task. For this very reason, the study has sought to unearth the challenges confronting final year students in the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School in the Bolgatanga Municipality in the Upper East Region in the execution of tasks in summarization. The study randomly selected 50 students and 5 English teachers and administered two sets of questionnaire to gather responses. In fact, the challenges in summary writing are as a result of students' inability to locate central ideas, their lack of comprehension skills, the poor reading habits by students as well as their poor acquisition of vocabulary. All the above are orchestrated by ineffective instruction on the part of teachers.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

Summary writing is that aspect of core English Language which has, from time immemorial, existed as a serious challenge to many students. It (summary writing) may be simply defined as the process by which a text is reduced to its basic essentials. As regards the definition, it is an identification mark denoting one's capability and ingenuity in the English Language already-mentioned. Summary writing has almost always been used as one of the measuring rods in a bid to measure intelligence and scholarship (Nanglakong, Ganaa, Galaa, Dery, Dabi, & Napaala, 2019). In the West African countries that conduct the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), summary writing is a core component in the English Language paper to which much attention is given in textbooks. Owing to this assertion, summary writing is meant to test one's intelligence, background knowledge as well as the stylistic skill of the individual in question. It is worth-emphasizing that summary writing, notwithstanding the essential role it plays, still poses difficulties to students and therefore, should be handled with all the care and seriousness it requires.

From this declaration, it is evident that the significance of summary writing in schools cannot be overemphasized. On the other hand, it is worthy to note with grave concern that, students' responses to summary writing questions over the years call for critical attention by all and sundry who have ventured into the English Language education industry.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

The challenges students face generally in the study of English as a second language cannot be overemphasized (Ezeh, Anidi, & Nwokolo, 2021). Many a student has not been able to grasp the language even at the highest level of education in our cherished country, Ghana, even till now. Efforts have been made since the colonial times to get every Ghanaian to be able to have a fair knowledge of English, at least, for the sake of communication. This has been done in several ways including adult education where shepherds and elderly people who could not go to school during the day and who passed school-going age respectively were afforded the opportunity to learn a bit of English at night. Those who got the chance to attain formal education were put either in a formal or an informal structure where teachers/instructors with a certain level of skills offered voluntary service to their underprivileged relatives within their vicinity. Such instructors did their best and churned out a lot of scholars who attained, at least, a level of education of which English has served as a tool for communication (Boateng, Agyei-Baffour, Angel, & Enemark, 2020).

Irrespective of the level of education in the English Language, its learners still experience some challenges which sometimes make other scholars marvel at the level of proficiency of such educated elites. Some highly educated personalities even use some words and expressions inappropriately which shows that even the educated elite do not have all the rudiments of the English language off-head. They know that they cannot prove to know everything as some people normally claim. Some expressions such as “return back”, “repeat again” have been repeatedly used by some highly educated people which triggers the question whether those learned persons actually studied the English Language. This goes without saying that, challenges in the acquisition of the English Language are realized at every stage of learning. The native

speakers themselves have their own story to tell even when they claim to write and speak it better as expected than its secondary learners. Metaphorically, as one travels to a strange land, one discovers new things and those new things get one acquainted with the environment. In a more physical vein, learners of the English language discover new vocabulary as they explore the venture through further studies. One can never learn enough and one cannot learn all to be called the best (Nsengimana, Bazimaziki, Nyirahabimana, Mushimiyimana, Mutarutinya, Mugabo, & Nsengimana, 2021).

Coincidentally, summary writing has been one of the areas of the English Language paper that students have challenges in. Students find it rather difficult to understand the rudiments of summary writing as they prepare to move to the class where they have to write the WASSCE. Every year, reports from WAEC have it that most students perform abysmally in the English Language. The Chief Examiners' reports usually observe that most of the failures in English Language are traceable to poor performance in summary writing (WAEC, 2018).

In Ghana, it is recognized that English plays an important role in national discourse and is certainly taught and studied everywhere in the country. In the case where a student fails in the Language of English, it is obvious that, that student's progress has been stifled as far as higher learning is concerned. Summary writing can conveniently be explained as the process by which a longer text is reduced to a selection of essential information whilst doing away with garnishing an extraneous material from the original text (Chew, Idris, Loh, Wu, Chua & Bimba 2019). Summary writing is one essential way of testing the comprehension of students in any given text (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011). It is a requirement for students to adopt various schemes to produce a summary which is usually the shorter form of the original text. The said schemes are highly important in summary writing as they form the fundamental rules and principles which,

as a matter of fact, determine the sort of material to include and do away with any unnecessary material while being mindful of the meaning of the original piece. Basically, summary writing involves the shortening of a text dependent on the main and secondary ideas in a text and subsequent restructuring by the reader (Ozdemir, 2018). Summary writing can be taken as a piece of work that involves two central issues namely the capability to understand the primary ideas and the systematic organization of a text as well as the ability to produce a brief, concise and sequential re-ordering of the author's ideas. The reader must be ready and able to use core skills such as reading and comprehending the content of a text, searching for the most vital ideas in the text and writing out a shorter form. The production of a summary is dependent on the text on hand. It does not need any pre-planning of the content and structure of a text as all the mechanisms are centered on the core text. The author's decision on what to retain and what to delete in summary writing depends on how he puts together the information and how to make sure that the summary produced does not distort the import of the original work. This definitely involves the act of reading the original work repetitively (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011).

Even though summary tasks can help the total academic development of learners' English, there are some restrictions in situations where the learners do not have a good grounding in the language. Hence, their inadequacies in the identification and writing of printed material might bring about some shortcomings in the identification and integration of ideas into a related statement (Chen & Su, 2011). Summary writing has come to be part and parcel of the core English paper in the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) as one of the determinants of students' mastery and competence in the English Language.

## **1.2 Background to Summary Writing in Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School**

Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School is located in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Statistically, it is the first girls' senior high school in the region which has been in operation since 1973. Having been teaching in the said school since 2009, the researcher has observed over the period that students have not been doing well in the English paper anytime the WASSCE is written. Checks and observations have revealed that, the students' poor performance is as a result of inadequate understanding of the summary aspect of the English paper. Girls are widely known to be studious. However, students of Bolga Girls Senior High School, have been finding it difficult understanding summary writing which is a core component of the WASSCE English Language paper. The said students engage in mindless lifting of paragraphs containing the required answers, poor display of basic skills and poor structuring of sentences. Several attempts had been made by teachers of English who had taught there before the researcher joined in the race to guide students to understand the rudiments of the said summary writing. However, not much has been achieved.

From the researcher's experience, summary writing is introduced to students in their second semester (third term) of the second year. This is done by some teachers who feel that it is usually too early to introduce summary writing to first year students who might not have found their feet in their new environment. Whether this is the cause or otherwise, the researcher has offered to look into the issue in order to help students of the school and, by extension, all students of Ghana.

## **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Summary writing is essential to students as it lends a helping hand to other skills of learning endeavors (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2011). Notwithstanding the importance of

summary writing, writers of books meant for candidates to aid them pass their examinations in the English paper do not have a clear-cut approach to the presentation of the summary aspect. Hence, it has brought to the fore a huge chunk of challenges to most learners. As a matter of fact, summary writing poses a big challenge even to instructors of the English Language when they are put in the position of learners let alone students who are being prepared for their examination in the English paper. The gravity of the challenges of this aspect of the English paper on the performance of students has always been conspicuously identified in the yearly reports of the Chief Examiners. Students glaringly expose their challenge in summary writing by engaging in mindless lifting, poor display of basic skills in summary writing and lack of skills in sentence structuring. As a teacher in the school, these observations were made after the researcher had handled lessons in the area in question. Although several attempts have been made by authors in the field of English with regard to the preparation of students towards the writing of the WASSCE, most students still lag behind in the understanding of the summary aspect. The yearly analysis of students' performances in summary writing clearly shows that students, as a matter of fact, have difficulties pertaining to the instructions of summary writing. Unless such difficulties are sufficiently addressed, students will continue to perform poorly in this aspect of the English language paper. Even though a lot of research have been carried out in a similar topic (Ababio, 2020: Nanglakong et al, 2019: Ofori, 2020), the problem of summary writing still persists. There is, therefore, the need to contribute to the ongoing literature by examining the challenges of summary writing among students in the Senior High Schools particularly Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. For this reason, this study has sought to unearth the challenges, causes and solutions to tackling summary writing.



#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To identify challenges encountered by students in dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language.
2. To establish the causes of the challenges in relation to the texts in summary writing in the English Language.
3. To identify the solutions to the challenges of summary writing.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the challenges students face in dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language?
2. What are the causes of the challenges students face in dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language?
3. What are the solutions to the challenges of summary writing?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The result of the study will aid students to identify the sources and the causes of the challenges they face in summary writing. In a wider sense, the knowledge acquired by students could be used for the benefit of the society in which they will find themselves even after attaining the highest level of education. In addition, the result of this study will be used to prepare teachers to design better approaches to guide their students in acquiring better summary writing skills.

Furthermore, the result of this study, will help educational policy makers in designing more feasible curricular for the guidance of students in this aspect of the English Language paper at the WASSCE. Apart from the above-mentioned, the result of the

study will add to already available forms of literature on the difficulties students face in summary writing.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

In the collection of data, the instruments that will be used may present some limitations on the study in question. Going further in the course of the interview, there is high possibility that the respondents may not be able to provide accurate responses to the questionnaire provided. Equally, they may either lie or overstate their responses to the questionnaire availed to them. Therefore, pilot testing of the questionnaire with a small group of respondents before conducting the actual study can help identify and resolve any ambiguities or confusing language. Furthermore, the researcher would ensure that confidentiality and anonymity are maintained, reducing the likelihood of respondents lying or overstating their responses. This can be achieved by clearly communicating to respondents that their answers will be kept confidential and their identities anonymous, thereby building trust between the researcher and the respondents.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

The scope of this research work does not go beyond the students of Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. The researcher's reason for confining himself to this school was that it has its own attendant issues. The students mostly get pregnant before they get to the third year. Any student who manages herself till the third year more or less thinks that, that is the level at which she should terminate her education and either go into marriage or learn a trade. It may interest one to note that some intervention programmes have been put in place to better the educational lot of the students. Organizations such as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) has supported students of the school over a long period. Some of the students, in fact, find their way to higher institutions of learning.

Though there exist several areas worth-researching, the focus of this work is on summary writing. This aspect has been considered for this special attention as a result of the unfavorable remarks issued by chief examiners of the examining body of the West Africa sub-region.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five main chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction to the study. It further discusses the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions, significance of the study as well as limitations of the study making up the first chapter. Review of relevant literature under the theoretical as well as the empirical frameworks are covered in chapter two. Chapter three entails the methodology used for the said study. The fourth chapter centers on the analysis and discussion of results. Last but not least, the conclusions, recommendations, contributions to knowledge as well as suggestions for further research are treated in chapter five.

### **1.10 Summary**

The importance of summary writing in English language education cannot be overemphasized, as it is a core component in language exams and is used to measure one's intelligence, background knowledge, and stylistic skill. Despite its importance, summary writing poses difficulties for many students, and their responses to summary writing questions over the years call for critical attention. Challenges in the acquisition of English language are realized at every stage of learning, and summary writing has been one of the areas that students have challenges in. Poor performance in summary writing has been identified as a major cause of failure in English language exams. It is crucial that summary writing is handled with care and seriousness it requires, and that teachers adopt various schemes to teach summary writing, which forms the

fundamental rules and principles that determine the sort of material to include in a summary. In Ghana, where English plays an important role in national discourse and is taught everywhere, students who fail in English face a stifled progress as far as higher learning is concerned.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter has dealt with literature relevant to the study on hand. The literature review was carried out under three themes associated with the research objectives and put under three broad areas of interest: conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies.

Students of Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School find summary writing so difficult and unsurmountable. As a senior high school, the students are examined, as in other schools, in summary writing as one of the components of their final year English paper including several areas of academic endeavor involving specific fields preferred to be called elective subjects and core subjects of which English is a part. As the names imply, the core subjects are offered by all students whereas the elective subjects are offered by students according to their areas of study.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Review

In explaining the schema theory, one is made to understand that it is based on a stunning belief that “every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world” (Anderson et al,1977 as already exposed by Al-Issa, 2015 page 41). It is prudent to note that schema could also be known as schemata. It is as well perceived as a cognitive construct by which information is assembled in a long-term memory (Fazliddinovna, 2022). They clearly represent the experiences, concepts of understanding, attitudes, values, skills and strategies one brings to bear on a text condition (Conley, 2014). In the same vein, it is stated by Khaghanine-jad in 2015 that a schema is a cognitive framework or conception that supports in organizing and interpreting information in

research circles. The fact that they allow one to resort to an easier or convenient way in expressing a wide expanse of information is existent in the immediate environment.

As cited by Al-Issa (2015), Smith (1994, p.8) has expressed 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 all hopes and..... against bewilderment. In down-to-earth terms, the schema theory has it that all knowledge is arranged in units. The schema can, therefore, be wholly considered as any concept for the understanding of how knowledge is represented and administered (Khaghanine, 2016).

With regard to the metacognitive theory, it was introduced by Flavell in the year 1976. According to him, metacognition is one's own cognitive processes and products or anything in relation to them (p.232). Metacognition is a blanket term encompassing the structures in relation to the thinking process and information of individuals (Akturk and Sahel, 2011). In the year 1978, Brown carried out several undertakings in the form of studies focusing on understanding available information or the challenges related to either an effective use of information or has been clearly defined to the fullest. Another scholar, Brown (1978) defined metacognition as students' awareness and organization of thinking processes which they used in planned learning and problem-solving endeavors. Lai (2011) has it that metacognition is just what supports a student who has been taught a particular challenge context to retrieve and apply that same strategy in a similar but new context.

The application of these teaching approaches in a summary writing classroom can be achieved through explicit teaching or an inquiry lesson. Explicit teaching, also known as direct instruction, involves the teacher beginning the lesson by modeling the desired

learning and introducing the lesson's procedure (Siemon et al., 2013). The teacher then guides students through classroom problems using instructional problem-solving methods, which involve analyzing and interpreting the problem in context. This approach is consistent with the behaviorist perspective, as students engage with summary concepts and construct their own conceptual knowledge while the teacher observes their reactions to the content.

Marsh (2010) suggests that when learners become too focused on their interests instead of the task, student outcomes may suffer and not be achieved at a high academic level. This learner-centered approach provides many opportunities for collaborative work, but it may also lead to a "lack of student involvement and boredom" (Marsh, 2010). Additionally, unconfident students may feel dominated by more confident peers during group activities.

In conclusion, the schema theory and metacognitive theory provide valuable insights into how individuals acquire, process, and retain knowledge. The schema theory highlights the role of prior knowledge and experiences in comprehension, while the metacognitive theory emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and reflection in learning. Also, incorporating both direct instruction and inquiry-based lessons in a classroom can be advantageous. By understanding and applying these theories, educators can design effective instructional strategies that promote deeper understanding and critical thinking among learners. As research in this field continues to evolve, it is essential for educators to stay updated on the latest findings and integrate them into their teaching practices to enhance student learning outcomes.

### **2.1.1 Application of the theories to the Study**

Reading comprehension serves as a springboard to understanding summary writing. The schema theory has a phenomenal influence on reading comprehension. Understanding the role of schema in the process of reading in association with comprehension provides an insight into why students may fail to make out meaning of a text provided and in due course, summarize the text or some parts of such a text. In a situation where students acquaint themselves with the topic of the text they are reading, that is if they possess the schema content, they are much in tune with the structural build-up of the text aspect to be able to make out words and equally recognize how they firmly match in a sentence. Without a qualified level of the schemas, there would be a resultant deficiency in the practice of reading comprehension and subsequently there would emanate an adversity on summary writing (Al-Issa,2015).

According to Diuk, Barreyro, Ferroni, Mena & Serrano, (2019), students' apparent reading challenges may be traceable to inadequate acquisition of primary knowledge (content, form and linguistic). Ironically, people may have schemata to the most considerable level yet, they would be unable to understand a given text due to inadequate activation of the said schemata.

As regards reading comprehension, the schema positions itself that a text does not in itself carry meaning. That is to say, the meaning of a text bears substance only when the reader is able to combine words in the conscious compartment of the brain and interpret it either orally or in printed form. Reading is only a visual activity and not automatically a derivation of meaning from a text. A reader may read the printed material without any understanding of the text. Meaning is drawn only when the schema is in action. It, therefore, goes without saying that, a text is understood depending on the amount of associated schema readers have as they read. The incapability to



understand a text or make sense out of a text is related to the issue of inappropriate schemata that can easily be accommodated in the context of the text (Al-Issa, 2015).

Considering the context of summary writing, the summary writer must first read the text in question and comprehend it before proceeding which serves as a panacea to the summary activity. Metacognition is the intentional thinking about how one thinks and learns which serves as a catalyst in achieving the ultimate goal in summarization. In this respect, metacognition encompasses the following mental activities organized in forms of interrogation:

1. What are the steps that I need to follow?
2. What do I already know about this topic?
3. Where did I get stuck when trying to solve this problem?
4. What is the assignment asking me to do?

Furthermore, metacognition has a relationship with an involvement of knowing when one knows, knowing when one does not know, and knowing what to do when one does not know. In other words, it has to do with monitoring oneself and correcting one's own learning process.

Metacognition equally has to do with knowing oneself as a learner; that is, knowing one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner. It is general knowledge that, at one time or the other, everyone is a learner of a kind because, new things come our way in our daily lives.

Considering the reading context, metacognition as a theory engulfs thinking about what one is doing as one reads. As portrayed by Partede (2019), strategic readers do not only sample the text ... and make new hypotheses while reading: they engage in several activities as they read. Such activities can be grouped into three phases: pre-reading

(before reading), reading (while reading) and post-reading (after-reading). In the first phase (pre-reading), the reader engages in identifying the purpose as well as identifying the form or type of text.

In the second stage (reading or while reading), thoughts are all about the generality of the characteristics of the form or type of the text such as locating the main idea or the topic sentence, following complementing ideas geared towards a conclusive result, foretelling the author's message they want to put across emanating from already-gathered information.

In the last phase, the reader makes frantic attempts at creating a summary and to conclude or attempt to make out meaning of what has been read. By this, the reader becomes more intuitive as the brain is tasked to load off what stuff has been deposited and a search conducted in such a chamber to get something valuable in the form of the said meaning being looked for.

### **2.1.2 Students' loopholes in Summary writing in WASSCE- extracts from the chief examiners' reports**

Over the years, it has been a cliché regarding the hurdle candidates battle with regarding summary writing without a convincing solution to the execution of the monster for good. Here, an analysis of the chief examiners' reports for the past three years has revealed the ensuing information.

*The 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 could not differentiate between topic sentences and illustrations. Most candidates found it difficult to answer the questions appropriately- Chief Examiner's 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 Examiner's Report 2019***

*This tested the candidates' ability to sift relevant material from the passage and present it in a concise form. The rubrics stated clearly that candidates should use their own words as far as possible and in sentences. Unfortunately, many candidates performed poorly by lifting lengthy portions of the passage as answers. Those who wrote answers with extraneous materials, grammatical and expression errors were penalized. Since the summary passage was on social media which most of them were familiar to, they, therefore, resorted to writing answers which were out of context. Candidates must read and understand the passage before answering it-* ***Chief Examiner's Report 2020*** .

### **2.1.3 Notion of summary and summary writing**

Many a definition has been given by several scholars on the above subject to the effect that different ideas have been expressed in a bid to present a suitable explanation to the term in question. In each of the scholarly presentations there is a common characteristic shared by all in the form of brevity. Words such as reduction, brief, succinct etc. are used to denote this. Any definition presented is only a fair representation of what the word stands for and not the ultimate. That is the more reason why several people usually have various ways of expressing one same thing in question. Despite the variance in explanations, there is a focal point that they all direct to just as we have in the following definitions.

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. Yang (2016) posits that summary is the process of determining what content in a passage is most important and transforming it into a succinct statement in one's own words. With regard to Beckley, (2004), summary is the reduction of a text to one-third or to one-quarter its original size, clearly stating the author's meaning, and maintaining main ideas. In a similar vein, Langan, (1993) states that summary is the reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points. Similarly, Hacker, (2008) puts it that a summary is a task that involves stating a work's thesis and main ideas 'simply, briefly, and accurately'. It could also be explained as a condensed version of an existing text (Idris, 2014).

The terms summary and summarization may be used interchangeably as they are considered synonymous. According to Winograd (1984), summarization is simply described as the ability to convey the main points concisely. With the above definition, it can be seen that the two (summary and summarization) are indeed interchangeable. Therefore, the definitions indicate that summary or summarization is a process that has to do with higher cognitive skills making it a highly demanding task (Alawaji, 2020). It is common knowledge that anything demanding is energy-sapping, time-consuming and brain-racking as it involves a lot of processes. It, hence, calls for a procedural approach to be able to churn out any reasonable results. This is supported by what some scholars have said in certain circles regarding the call for the cognitive skills earlier mentioned. 'The summary writer must decide what to include, what to eliminate, how to reword or reorganize information, and how to ensure that the summary is true to the original meaning' (Hidi & Anderson, 1986, p. 26). Restructuring the source text requires 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.

... summarizing is a broader and more synthetic exercise for which determining importance is a necessity though not a sufficient condition. In summary writing, it is important for readers to sieve through voluminous units of texts and differentiate relevant from irrelevant ideas and synthesize those ideas into a unified whole that stands to uphold the original information. Taking into cognizance how summary writing is considered in academia and not only in language teaching but in other areas of economic writing, the skill shows how relevant it is for students to acquire the rudiments with the aim of getting over their academic ventures. On the other hand, such skills do not come the way of students. For example, apart from reading comprehension skills, decreasing the text to its salient points is a requisite requirement which entails recognition and deletion of extraneous information from a written text (Karbalaee & Rajyashree, 2010; Ashrafzadeh & Nimehchisalem, 2015).

The capability to decipher what is relevant from what is irrelevant calls for meticulous judgement with respect to the reader who should be able to bring into being material that is new which can replace the original (Chihobor, 2016).

Summarization or summary writing is one very important tool used in our schools to bring about improvement in students comprehension capability. This skill so-mentioned involves some processes in relation to reading and understanding the text in question as well as identifying the most important information in the text and duplicating a relatively shorter text that can be named summary. Summary writing or summarization is a constituent of the English syllabus purposely for the assessment and

comprehension abilities of students in all summary work. Students who go beyond the senior high level, find summarizing as important due to the fact that it helps them to learn effectively. The skill in question heavily gives support to other skills such as taking notes, writing and reading. Summary writing is different from other writing tasks such as writing stories or reports because it is based on the original or existing piece of writing (Idris, Baba & Abdullah, 2014; Hidi & Anderson, 1986).

Summary writing does not need any fundamental planning of the content and structure of any text as it is based on information as well as ideas which are obtainable from the mother text. However, it largely hinges on the decision of the writer of the said text to decipher and include any other relevant information to retain, reorganize or reframe the siphoned information as well as to do away with all illustrations within the context of preserving the meaning of the original text. In addition to this, to produce a good summary is dependent on the comprehension of the main text. This calls for reading and writing activities carried out over and over again with regard to the original text and the summarized one under production (Kaur, 1997). It is prudent to note that summary writing has to do with a lot of approaches which instructors must equip themselves with in order to identify and apply in their attempt to guide students so as to produce a good and unquestionable summary. Therefore, it is not uncommon and unreasonable for students to get a firm grip of the said strategies to enable them to produce better summaries.

In the case where the student writes the summary, he creates new material from the mother text by concentrating on the relevant points (Chihobor, 2016).

The most central objective of summarization or summary writing is for this matter, to lay bare briefly the central ideas of any work. Every summary that qualifies to be named

so takes into consideration correct information presented in an efficient manner such that the important details of any work is made shorter than the mother text (Frey, Fisher & Hernandez, 2003). Differentiating itself from any other form of academic work, summarization or summary writing does not call for any fundamental scheming of text content and structure by churning out new ideas since most of the principles come from ideas taken from the main work. However, it is dependent on certain critical assessments and judgements of the objectives of the reader such as deciding on what to retain, what to include, what to exclude, how to put together the bits and pieces of the relevant information as well as to ensure that the original idea expressed is uncompromised (Kirtland & Saunders, 1991). To produce a good summary writing calls for a complete understanding of the main text and the persistent activities of reading and writing (Chew et al, 2019). Many students and teachers of Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School have the notion that summary writing is difficult. This makes students, for that matter, not to pay attention to lessons on summary writing availed to them by their teachers who leave no stone unturned to help bring understanding to the students feel that they will never understand that aspect of the English Language.

## **2.2 Types of Summary Writing**

There are two main types of summaries: descriptive summary and evaluative summary. These are or can be microstructural and macrostructural respectively. The microstructure has to do with the relationship between the order of flow of sentences in actual texts whilst the macrostructure deals with the relationship between blocks of sentences and the global organization of texts (Hutchins, 1987). It is worthy to note that, information mastering text structure helps one to identify very important information and remove extraneous material as well as relate to the skill making generalization or super ordinations. Having considered the wider spectrum of the

summary topic, it is worthy enough to consider two main kinds of summary. One of such kinds is carried out as a way of understanding a text which is the study tool in question. Another is the act of reducing a given specification of length or detail of a profession or academic need (Sackey Fio, 2007).

Taking into cognizance the quantum of text material taken out from the indigenous source to constitute the summary, there are types such as precis, the descriptive, the paraphrase and the analytical.

### **2.2.1 The Precis**

Precis, though of French origin, is a word that stands for a type of summary that is presented in the writer's words about a text source. In this regard, it is highly characteristic of this type of summary that it does not make any attempt to draw any conclusions with regard to the original text, its audience or anything relating to the text. It gives the reader an accurate but brief plan of the original which is bereft of the writer's opinion of the subject (Seyer, 1995).

Under normal circumstances, a precis is supposed to be one-third the original text and as well presented in its initial tone. In fact, a precis is a brief of another text that contains the main points but with little embellishment which is usually four to eight sentences in length (Frey *et al.*, 2003). According to Cohen (1994), the precis aims at giving a brief but accurate map of the original text. It provides the controlling ideas in the original but leaves other details and examples. From the afore-discussed, it is prudent to mention that the precis must take the point of view of the original writer. This goes without saying that, the writer of the summary will write as though he were the original writer.



### **2.2.2 The Descriptive Summary**

A descriptive summary is one that must provide all required information that is contained in the restatement as it is in the precis. However, it should not just be a plan of the mother text; it should be a bit more detailed than the precis. It is this form of summary that the summary writer can bring to bear his observations of the text to the readers. This form of summary which is more detailed than the precis, states the kind of evidence the original work presents and how it is organized. This goes without saying that writers add explanations to the precis to come out with the descriptive summary (Sackey-Fio, 2007)

### **2.2.3 The Analytical Summary**

The analytical summary is a merger of the descriptive and the precis forms of summaries. This is not necessarily written in one's own words and limited to the essential ideas accommodated in the original piece. It is a bit similar to a paraphrase. The analytical summary, characteristically, identifies the author and the title of the work in the opening paragraph. Its subsequent paragraphs would contain central points to develop the main assertion. The paragraph that concludes this type of summary contains a restatement of the main idea. The dominant attitude must be carried along by the primary writer. Except in the case of a historical piece of writing, the presentation should be made in the present simple. For example, "the author writes" and not "The author wrote." In analytical summary one needs to speak in their person explaining what the author of the work you are summarizing already said whilst talking of the author as a separate person (Westby et, al. 2010).

### **2.2.4 The Paraphrase Summary**

In ordinary language, a paraphrase is merely a restatement of any piece of writing especially in academic circles. With the issue on hand, the piece of writing so referred

to is a text or a passage. In other words, it is the re-organization of any essential information as well as ideas expressed by another person in a new way. Simply, it attempts to clarify the text that is being paraphrased. Usually, a paraphrase does not attract any direct quotation. However, when it does, the paraphrase simply tries to locate the source's statement or to clarify the context in which it presents itself. A paraphrase, in a sense, preserves the essential meaning of the material being paraphrased (De Souza, 1995).

In a paraphrase, as indicated by Adika (2009), one pretends to be the author and speaks from the author's point of view. The paraphrase merely presents the original writer's ideas directly: the summary writer then writes very much as if he were the original author. Ironically, the paraphrase summary is usually a bit more comprehensive than the analytic. The basic difference is the perspective from which the writer of the summary must take in writing the summary. For a process of writing to qualify as a summary of another text, it should be about formatives and the details that make up the original text (Sackey-Fio, 1993). In fact, as something relating to the conditions governing writing, students are to recompose the text in their own wording whilst brevity is the watchword.

### **2.2.5 Factors Militating Against Summary Writing**

It has been observed that summary writing over the years has been a herculean task more in the hands of students. Even until now, students believe and understand from no pedagogical source that summarizing is quoting or lifting directly from the text. Without an iota of doubt, writing as a skill is one of the most difficult tasks for learners of English as a second language.

Quoting, as mentioned above, is the act of acquiring and re-writing what a writer has already brought to his readership. Usually, quoted words are marked with inverted commas also known as quotation marks. In relation to quoting, when a student reproduces the very words, sentence structure and construction, it is termed “lifting”. In a situation where a student is good at generalization, writing a good summary may not be a big challenge. While good summarizers concentrate on the gist of texts, poor summarizers plough back a given text and all its accompanying details. In several situations, students have a big challenge with an author’s ideas and intents with their own words (Havola, 1986). Those students who rather do well in summary writing assignments view the said tasks in very bad perspectives, generalizing and making inferences, not altering the ideas of the writer and bringing about something new that is within the scope of preserving the primary idea expressed in the text. Poor performers in summary writing tasks see such tasks in myopic considerations by re-writing the author’s idea (Havola, 1986)

It is documented and availed that limited vocabulary is a hindrance for students in their attempts to express themselves both in speaking and in writing especially in summary /summarization/summarizing. Most students find it difficult to express an author’s ideas whilst making sure that the intent of the writer is not compromised (Hood, 2008). The process by which key concepts of texts are identified and skills applied on paraphrased sentence structures to make the finished product an exactly compressed summary representing the original is, hence, a challenge for such students (Cho, 2012). Quite apart from that, other schools of thought have it that the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) have a negative effect on summary writing generally as a result of the various linguistic and cultural settings or backgrounds (Cho, 2012).

Owing 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 factors that affect summary writing. There is a close relationship between summarization and the characteristic nature of the text in question such as the length of text, genre and complexity involving vocabulary, sentence structure, abstractness, familiarity of ideas as well as improper or unclear organization (Hidi and Anderson, 1986). The genre of the original text can have a dire impact on summarization. Students have it easier summarizing narratives than they do with others, for example, expositions (Cho, 2012). The complex nature of the passage has to do with dotted vocabulary across the text, elaborate sentence structure, abstractness, unfamiliarity of concepts and ideas as well as incompetent or vague organization (Hidi and Anderson, 1986). The non-availability of a topic sentence makes identification of the essential details difficult for students (Cho, 2012).

Virtually, more complex passages call for more conscious and deliberate judgements (Brown and Day, 1983). Ideas may be related in a short text and can be expressed in a topic sentence. This makes summarizing a shorter text easier than in a longer one. In a situation where longer texts are presented, there is a higher demand for load processing, evaluations and decisions in establishing the essential parts accurately and concisely compressing the text on hand (Hidi & Anderson, 1986).

### **2.3 Factors affecting Summary writing Development**

The importance of psychological aspects in acquiring a foreign or secondary language is crucial. In this context, the focus is on the research findings related to these factors, specifically in terms of ESL/EFL writing improvement. Several psychological factors are examined, such as motivation, self-assurance, writing-related stress, and other factors that contribute to negative apprehension about writing. These elements appear

to have a significant impact on the development of ESL/EFL writing skills, as discussed further below.

Bacha (2002, p. 12) explains that inadequate motivation can pose a challenge for learners and educators alike, which is particularly evident in EFL writers struggling to enhance their writing abilities at the college level. This challenge is amplified for L1 Arabic non-native speakers of English enrolled in mandatory English comprehension courses. In this context, developing summary writing skills is seen as essential to acquire fundamental academic research skills, although it may not be a motivating experience.

Self-confidence is another psychological factor that can have a significant impact on students' writing development. Okoye (2011) suggests that writing multiple drafts and prioritizing content and organization over grammatical errors can help improve summary writing and boost students' confidence in their writing abilities. Likewise, Albertson (2006) argues that students who have confidence in their ability to learn and try new methods tend to adapt and adjust more quickly than those who lack such confidence in their literacy practices. Sasaki (2004) found that overseas experiences can enhance students' English proficiency, fluency, and confidence in general English writing.

Writing anxiety is also identified as a factor that can negatively influence both learners' motivation and academic achievement, as well as teachers' attitudes towards writing. Writing apprehension was found to have an adverse impact on the quality of students' summary writing. Furthermore, low-apprehension students exhibited higher self-esteem than those with high levels of apprehension, while low self-esteem students

were more likely to experience apprehension in their writing than their high self-esteem counterparts.

### **2.3.1 Proficiency Level**

According to various scholars, students who possess proficiency in English tend to produce high-quality written work (Cumming, 2006; Edelsky, 1982; Larios et al., 2001; Ito, 2004). Edelsky (1982) suggests that several factors, including the English proficiency of L2 student writers, can influence their level of knowledge and writing in English. Similarly, Larios et al. (2001) found that L2 students with higher proficiency levels spent less time formulating their ideas during the central stages of English writing. Cumming (2006) also demonstrated that L2 proficiency plays a significant role in enhancing the overall quality of students' written products, although it does not impact the processes of composing and summarizing.

Other researchers have explored the impact of students' mother tongue proficiency on their English writing skills, and they assert that students who are competent in their L1 writing tend to perform better in L2 writing. Dweik and Abu-Al-Hommos (2007), for instance, studied bilingual-Jordanian students' English writing skills and found a significant relationship between their Arabic proficiency and their English writing performance, indicating that proficient Arabic writers tend to write well in English. This suggests that experiencing difficulties in writing in a foreign language may be linked to writing challenges in students' first language. Additionally, Ito (2004) observed that students who produce high-quality written work in their L1 tend to excel in their L2 writing.

However, not all studies have found a correlation between students' writing ability and their language or content proficiency. Bart and Evans (2003), for example, discovered

that possessing content knowledge did not significantly correlate with writing proficiency.

### **2.3.2 Instructional-Related Factors**

#### **Teaching Large Classes**

Blatchford et al. (2007) identify three main challenges posed by teaching large classes. The first is managing the classroom, which can be difficult. The second is that teacher-student relationships may suffer, especially for students who are shy and may not participate or ask questions. Teachers also struggle with time management, finding it challenging to devote sufficient time to marking, planning, and assessment. Additionally, large classes may lead to noise and non-academic management issues and can make it difficult for teachers to engage students. Large classes can also cause students to feel anonymous and distant from their teachers, which can negatively affect their learning (Isbell & Cote, 2009).

In Ghana, teaching large classes is a problem for the educational system, and teachers face many challenges. Benbow et al. (2007) attribute the growth of large classes in developing countries to global initiatives for universal education and rapid population growth. Amuah-Sekyi (2010) found that teaching and learning suffer in large class situations, limiting students' ability to contribute and engage in critical thinking. Despite efforts to improve learning, the impact of lessons may not meet expectations. In teaching summary writing where large classes exist, there is limited individual attention. With a larger number of students, it becomes more difficult for teachers to give individual attention to each student. This can make it problematic to identify and attend to the specific needs and deficiencies of each student when teaching summarization skills. Teaching summary can be affected by the reduction in interaction



and participation. In this situation, large classes often limit opportunities for meaningful interactions and participation. Owing to this, students may feel less inclined to participate actively in discussions or ask questions due to the crowded environment. Such limited engagements can affect the quality of class discussions, reducing the depth of understanding and practice in relation to summarization.

With regard to reading, large classes can limit students' access to resources. The availability of reading materials and resources can be overstretched. This is likely to result in limited access to books, articles, or other supplementary materials needed for comprehensive reading instruction. Insufficient access to resources can impede students' exposure to diverse texts and genres, which is crucial for developing strong reading skills. There is decrease in individual support when teaching reading in large class sizes. Indeed, it becomes challenging for teachers to provide individualized support to students during reading activities. Teachers may not have enough time to monitor and guide each student's progress, making it difficult to address individual reading challenges and offer designed strategies for improvement.

In Amuah-Sekyi's study, it was found that some students who are already well-developed can learn and expand their skills without much guidance and even make connections between what they learn in class and other sources. However, the majority of students cannot benefit from large classes and may struggle to keep up, becoming average students. Those who are weak may perform poorly and even drop out of school. This suggests that individual attention is not given to those who need it, and students with difficulties may have to rely on their peers or teachers outside of class time for help. This can lead to a lack of quality teaching and learning, as well as a lack of effective feedback. In large classes, it can be difficult for teachers to find time for marking, planning, and assessment, making it harder to assess the success of their



instruction throughout the semester. As a result, students may not be aware of their academic performance in terms of continuous assessment. Salebi (2004) shares this sentiment, stating that finding time for these tasks is a greater challenge in larger class sizes.

### **2.3.3 Blueprints to Good Summarization**

For a successful summary writing, there is the need for a very sharp comprehension skill (Chew et al.,2019). A lot of scholars have presented various definitions for reading comprehension. One of such definitions as presented by Nandhini & Balasundaram, (2013) has it that reading comprehension is the process by which the meaning of what is read is simultaneously siphoned and constructed. As a strategy, summarizing is one important approach that aids students to, as a matter of fact, immensely comprehend the piece of writing indicating a level of understanding by the reader (Pecjaka & Pirc, 2018).

In a situation where a student is able to master certain strategies such as identification of the topic sentence and its virtual selection, sentence combination, deletion, paraphrasing generalization and invention support in churning out very good summaries (Chew et al.,2019). One of the strategies that could be used as an implement to get a good summary is the topic sentence. This is a single sentence that contains the main idea of expression found in a paragraph. As is known, a paragraph usually contains a topic sentence and other supporting sentences. By being able to fish out the topic sentence, the paragraph is summarized. By disregarding the irrelevant material in a paragraph, one is said to use the method of deletion. Sentences are combined when two or more sentences are put together to bring about a brief and concise version. One other blueprint is the act of paraphrasing which involves rewriting a sentence taking into cognizance the writer's own words by recognizing the summary plan which

students can find important information and meaningfully join them with their own words or with those in the text. The most requisite requirement in summary writing is for students to first of all examine every sentence/paragraph critically by hunting for essential words as well as important details and put together the relevant information into a unified and meaningful whole (Westby, Culatta, Lawrence, & Hall Kenyon, 2010). Summaries, by conclusion, are more brief and more concise than the original passage. However, it reflects the synthesized structure of the text (Brown & Day, 1983) while conserving their meaning as that of the original text (Chew et al., 2019)

### **2.3.4 Procedure to Writing a Good Summary**

It is common knowledge that anything that is worth-doing is highly cherished by the performer. For the success of that venture, some laid-down procedures should be mapped out and activated. According to Hare and Borchardt, (1984) following the underlisted steps can produce a good summary.

1. Understand the passage: try to figure out what the text/passage is all about. That should be done by reading the text from start to finish. Then re-read the text in a bid to identify the theme of the passage.
2. In a case where lists of items are mentioned in the passage, do well to replace them with words or phrases. For example, a single word could be used to replace items as follows: salt, pepper, “dawadawa,” “ancovi”, etc could be collectively called ingredients.
3. Use a topic sentence: In a case where the original writer does not provide a topic sentence, the summary writer should have to provide one.
4. Do away with all trivial material: This is because summaries are supposed to be short and should therefore be devoid of unnecessary information such as repetitions.

5. Paragraphs that seek to expand or explain other paragraphs should be done away with. This is because they only exist to give details.

6. Check through and polish the product. Here, make adjustments to the final summary in order to produce a good collection.

Owing to the fact that no one is a repository of knowledge, other scholars have joined the research wagon with other presentations. One of such is Cho, (2012) who has come out with the following as useful steps in producing good summary with confidence.

*A. Identification and Organization of the Main Ideas and Important Information*

1. Put down the central idea.
2. Write down the important things the writer has put down as the main ideas
3. Check well to ensure that you understand what the main idea is and the things stated as important by the writer.
4. Show the main idea you are going to write about.
5. Organize your ideas in a sequential order.
6. Make sure you have only the required information devoid of any trivialities.
7. Roll out the summary.

*B. Clarification and Revision of the Summary*

8. Go over your summary appropriately, clarify any information if necessary and delete any irrelevant material

By the above-mentioned presentation, summaries involve synthesizing information from several quarters of an original text with the possibility of skipping very important information. All the same, a critical look at all the procedures documented by various

researchers indicate/reveal three similarities: clearer understanding of the text, identification of all relevant or important information and compression of relevant facts.

Yet still, Idris, Baba and Abdullah, (2011) have outlined the following out-of-experience rules in aid of understanding the rudiments of summary writing.

### **2.3.5 Deletion**

In this context, a summary sentence is produced by deletion if two or more words

1. are found from the same sentence in the indigenous text
2. are in sequence appearing in adjacent positions in the original text
3. retain their relative precedent relation as in the original text.
4. are less than the number of words of the original sentence

### **2.3.6 Sentence Merging**

In this direction, a summary sentence arises if the words are found

1. in various sentences from the original passage which come from sentences nearby or from the same paragraph.
2. applied together with other strategies
3. to involve the use of conjunctions in an attempt to put together phrases from various sentences.

### **2.3.7 Main Idea Extraction**

Considering the above issue, a summary sentence is produced by topic sentence selection if a:

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

### **2.3.8 Syntactic Transformation**

By syntactic transformation, sentence structure is not avoidable in an attempt to explain the above point. A summary sentence is, therefore, produced by syntactic transformation if:

1. the words are found from the same sentence in the original text
2. the order of the words is different from the original text

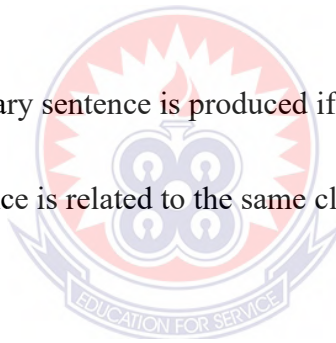
In a case where a summary sentence has been produced using a paraphrase,

1. the words in the sentence are similar/synonymous to the words in the sentence in the original text.

### **2.3.9 Generalization**

Under this point, a summary sentence is produced if:

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



### **2.3.10 Invention**

A summary sentence is produced by invention if:

Most of the words in the summary sentence are not found in any sentence in the original text but are syntactically related by lexical relationships.

## **2.4 Relationship between Reading and Writing in Relation to Summarization**

The basic requirement for the execution of a task in summarization is for learners of a second language to show both their reading and writing skills (Li, 2014). Some schools of thought have revealed that summarization is greatly influenced by the ability to understand a text through reading in the sense that, the writer must first of all, make enough sense of the target text (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978). Many studies have revealed

that summary writing can be time-consuming and energy-sapping to grasp not only for its cognitive nature but also for the fact that it calls for both reading and writing skills (Lin & Maarof, 2013, Nambiar, 2007). In a summary task, the person who engages in it needs to read and understand the text in its original form, identify the important information and synchronize the bits of information into a synthesized whole (Yuan Ke & Hoey, 2014). Treading on a similar path, Hee Ko (2009) states that reading and writing are interdependent as two of them have their skills intertwined and can prove to be more effective in that state. Chihobo, (2016) buttresses this point by stating that there seems to be connectivity between summary writing and reading /writing. Cho, (2012), equally echoes that summary writing is a fundamental contact between reading and writing in academic circles.

A task, out of many that is binding on a student who learns the English language, is summary writing which is a web of both reading and writing. The two are highly indispensable such that a lack in one affects the end product which is summary. This implies that, for any student to be able to write summary or answer summary questions, they should be well-grounded in the skills emanating from the two fields. Hood, (2008) and Hee, Ko, (2009) have stated, in this regard, that, the practice of summary writing from some sources have been a core activity and to test for comprehension, metacognitive skills, such as recall. It is not out of place that summary writing is part of the English language paper required of all WASSCE candidates to write and determine their next level of educational progression. Summary writing is closely linked to academic success (Hee Ko, 2009; Kim, 2001). Students who are able to clarify unfamiliar words and read the text several times are capable of producing a good and acceptable summary.

In the first reading, the reader should try to make out the author's idea as well as the purpose for which the text is written.

Competent summarizers master several techniques giving precedence to the meaning in the text and investigating how connected the various parts are to one and the other. Such summarizers read a text based on their own experiences and imaginations, attempt to summarize while reading is going on as well as spend a great amount of time reading and planning than writing (Havola, 1986). He holds the view that as compared to good summarizers, poor ones exert much energy and time on writing and a little time reading. This challenge arises as a result of insufficient acquisition of both reading comprehension skills and a lack of good background information. Poor summarizers should, therefore, be given the necessary support in understanding the process of learning from a text (Chong, 2012).

## **2.5 Advantages of Summaries**

Several arguments have been raised regarding the advantages derived from summary writing. One of such concerns raised by Cho, (2012) posits that, summary writing helps in proper understanding of comprehension. In a similar vein, Westby et al., (2010) put across that summarization brings about the greatest benefits in comprehension and prepares the grounds for long-lasting retention of information of any text. Since students must spend adequate time processing text material under consideration, summarization aids in learning as it confines itself to only relevant information in any given text (Westby et al., 2010). As if by coincidence, Hidi and Anderson, (1986) gathered that summary facilitates learning as it aids readers to clarify the meaning and importance of any discourse. Hence, both the teacher and the student benefit from it. To the teacher, determination of the student's ability to pick out a gist of a text, provide evidence for the comprehension ability of the student finally determines the student's

capability to give credence to the deserved (Westby et al., 2010). In the case of the student, the chance to communicate all important aspects of the text aids in determining understanding which serves as an avenue to independently decide and order ideas (Westby, et al., 2010). In a collaboration by Rinehart and Thomas (1993), where they presented a similarity in the idea expressed by Westby and others, effective summary requires reflection and decision-making which culminates in independence and self-reliance. They further echo that, summarization helps students to organize better as they come to appreciate the structure in which ideas are distributed in a text and how such ideas relate to each other (Rinehart et al., 1986). Summarization improves the capability of the student to make meaningful inferences and carry out critical reading (Jitendra et al., 2000). Summarization serves as a benefit to students as they individually engage in critical thinking demonstrated in decision-making. In this direction, they either include or omit whilst they arrange and re-arrange information; and as they fill in blank spaces where the author was implicit in order to rebuild a piece of writing that is meaningful and coherent enough. Majorie, (2001) states that, a student being sensitive to text structure and the use of various approaches dependent on the type of text under consideration is required in the summary writing task. The requirement is that students dealing with this summary exercise rearrange the text so as to use their own words as well as shift ideas to various positions. This is highly transformational thereby helping students to be more intuitive as they invent new structures and relationships between words and concepts.

## **2.6 Students' Responses to Summary Tasks**

There are no clear-cut approaches to the identification of plans put in place by students in summary writing. As a result, the ordeal of evaluating summary by students as individuals is a big issue to contend with by teachers of English. Hence, it serves as a



bottle-neck to the development of summary writing skills acquired by learners who are, in this case, students.

On the contrary, certain structures have been put in place to readily assess summaries that are produced by students. An example is the availed computer-structured programme referred to as summary sheet which has been developed to facilitate the expected responses regarding the content of the scripted summaries (Franzke, Kintsch, Caccamise, Johnson & Dooley, 2005; Lemaire Mandin, Dessus & Denhiere, 2005). The sheet so-mentioned above has some trust-worthy characteristics capable of providing responses on the stretch of the summary result as well as its importance or otherwise of the work in question.

In a similar vein, another system called LEA (Zipitria, Arruarte, Elorriaga, & de Harra, 2004a) avails some responses on the coherence, content coverage, the use of language and the adequacy of the summary product. Furthermore, some already-mentioned computer personnel have evolved a system called summary assessment system (Zipitria, Arruarte, Elorriaga, & de Harra, 2004b) which produces results on the essential constituents of summary writing. Several researches have brought about a lot of revelations regarding the growth of summarization feedback systems with the concentration on approaches associated with content like the concise nature of the summary, the absorption of main ideas and the removal of immaterial portions which only bloat the text in question.

In a situation where the teacher is privileged to have genuine responses from students, both the learner and the instructor stand the chance to gain as both parties get to know and learn as well as make amends for improvement on their approaches. Both written and oral responses are, in general, used in summarization instructions.

## 2.7 Empirical Studies

The empirical studies of a research work is based on observation and experience. In other words, it is the evaluation of previous empirical works to bring to rest a specific research issue. With this, works of other researchers already in the system are viewed and critically examined. Upon the examination, areas which should have been covered by such researchers but were not, are noted and explanations are given as to how they should have been handled. This goes to explain the point that no researcher is capable of exhausting every single item or information regarding any research work. At least, something must be lacking somewhere along the line as it takes another person to spot someone else's shortcoming. Such shortcoming could take the form of inappropriate or poor ways by which certain issues were handled in the work so referred to.

In this regard, Ababio (2020) worked on the topic "Investigating Poor Summary Writing Skills among Second Year Students of Sefwi Bekwai Senior High School." He applied the qualitative research design which appeals to the feelings and perceptions of the sample population about summary writing. As well, application of the random sampling technique was considered. The researcher made a considerable number of findings worth-noting. There was a lack of engagement with the summary text by the students; the students were unable to identify main ideas in a text; there was a lack of summary writing skills and strategies as well as lack of comprehension skills and vocabulary.

One other researcher with regard to summary writing is Ofori (2020) who considered the topic "Challenges Students Face in Summary Writing in Ghana Secondary Technical School, Takoradi". He adopted both the qualitative and the quantitative forms of research designs where he applied the questionnaire and the interview as the research instruments. The researcher found out that the students were not able to make out topic

sentences whilst some engaged in mindless lifting and used phrases and clauses without care. The research further revealed that, teacher-related factors impacted negatively on the students in summary writing. By extension, teachers of English in the school did not have a firm grasp of this aspect of the English Language paper. Some taught summary writing as if they taught comprehension. Positive classroom environment such as good seating arrangement and effective classroom management in the school yielded good results. Meanwhile, the absence of a well-equipped library facility served as a factor in the students' poor performance in the summary paper. Students who purposefully read more widely than others based their responses to summary text on their own opinions rather than focused on what the texts carried. Finally, the research revealed that, strategies in the teaching of summary writing availed by writers who attempted to help grow the system were not self - explanatory to students. The worst aspect was that, in some schools in Ghana teachers begin teaching summary writing in the second year.

Nanglakong et al (2019) in their work “Investigating Summary Writing Difficulty Among Students of Senior High Schools in the Bolgatanga Municipal” considered three schools in the Bolgatanga Municipality for their study. One of such schools is one for girls, another a mixed school but with secondary and technical orientation in order to observe the attitude of students found in such a doubly mixed environment. The authors used observations and questionnaire as their research tools. Regarding the sample population and technique, a random selection exercise was carried out with one hundred (100) students from each school with an “in” and “out” selection method where “in” meant respondent and “out” meant not respondent. From their research work, they observed and finally found out the following causes of the poor performance in summary writing by students of the considered schools blamable; the design of the

textbook, the teachers approach to the teaching of summary writing and the general perception of summary writing by students.

A research gap has been created by the three earlier researchers. This is the evidence research gap. An evidence research gap is one in which there is no evidence to address the research problem or insufficient evidence to address the research problem.

The researcher of this work would go beyond the attempts made by the afore-mentioned researchers by seeking permission from the headmistress of his school and organizing in-service training for the teachers of English therein. The exercise could be extended to other senior high schools in the Upper East Region if permission is granted by the regional director of education.

## **2.8 Summary**

From the chunk of literature reviewed, it has been gathered that summary writing is an art which focuses on reducing a given text to the barest minimum in terms of number of words without losing its original message. There are several types of summary writing depending on the length, style and detail. Examples of the types of summary writing are precis, analytical, paraphrase as well as the descriptive type.

It is common knowledge that summary writing requires critical and analytical reading. Considering this assertion, it is worth-noting that summary writing is a skill developed after comprehension of a text has taken place. Sackey-Fio (1996) assumes the unshakable position that comprehension has a close relationship with summary. Therefore, without comprehension, summary writing is impossible. Adika (1996), is the only personality who has proposed a radical move from the above approach. He, instead, holds the idea that there is the need to use written communication to introduce summary writing before any other approach is considered.

From the afore-presented issues, it is glaring that many authors have produced materials in the direction of helping students, especially, and the general public to get an understanding of summary writing. The approaches so far presented in this review, would serve as worthy material to whoever desires to understand summary writing depending on their field of operation.

All in all, the aspects treated in this chapter are theoretical framework and empirical studies. Regarding the empirical studies, a research gap has been created by the three earlier researchers on the topic in question. This is evidence research gap which has been taken care of. With respect to the theories, it is worthy to note that they are applicable to the study as mention is made about comprehension which is influenced by the schema and the metacognitive aspects of the learner.

The historical background of the English Language in senior high school course work is presented alongside the curriculum of the English Language in senior high school. The syllabus, the notion of summary and summary writing, the types of summary writing, the factors militating against summary writing as well as the blueprints and procedure to writing a good summary. The relationship between reading and writing in relation to summary writing, advantages of summaries and students' responses to summary tasks are all treated in this chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the study spells out the context of the study, design of the study, the study population, sampling/sampling technique, sample size, research instruments and pre-questionnaire administration. Apart from these already-mentioned ones, there are others such as validity, reliability, data analysis, and conclusion.

#### 3.1 Study Site

This study was conducted in the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School in the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper Region of Ghana. The school is the only girl school within the municipality and its environs. This institution is located at Zaare near the Bolgatanga Municipal Education Office off the Bolgatanga-Navrongo trunk road.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

Research approach refers to a form of enquiry that provides a concise direction for procedures in a study (Creswell, 2014). In fact, it is a scheme, structure and strategy subject to investigation which is considered as an avenue to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2011). The qualitative research approach was considered for this study.

Note should be taken of the fact that qualitative studies explore, discover as well as help the entity in question (individual or group or institution) to gain an insight into the feelings and thoughts of people. Qualitative research reaches to the thoughts and the feelings of people regarding a particular matter (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This research approach was used instead of any other because the researcher owed it a duty to

determine the thoughts and bottlenecks of participants with respect to challenges in summary writing by collecting qualitative data for analysis.

The researcher would be able to trace the reasons for which students of Bolgatanga Girls Senior High school have a specific attitude towards summary writing bringing about the challenges they have in summary writing hence deepening their inability to summarize texts which has a toll on their studies.

Moreover, this research approach saves money. Since it uses a smaller sample size which equates to research costs, the researcher can save money to cater for other commitments than it could have been in other research approaches.

Other forms of approaches may have their gains, but the qualitative research approach produces faster results than the others. This is because it is easy to carry out unlike the others which are difficult to carry out.

The qualitative research approach allows creativity to serve as a driving force. Respondents are encouraged to be themselves. The data collected from such a research approach tends to be more accurate than in others. One other reason for considering this approach is its nonrigidity. The researcher is permitted to follow up on any answer they wish to generate more depth and complexity to the data collected. In the same vein, this research method does not require a specific direction or format for data collection. In such a situation, if a researcher gets to realize that they are not getting the required results from any attempt employed, a different effort could be employed immediately.

### **3.3 Research Design**

With respect to the view of both Frankfort and Nachmias (1992, p.19), a research design refers to the stages that come to play in a research process. In this wise, a case study was adopted. A case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a

contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its....” (Yin, 2014:16). A case study is an example of qualitative research approach and this very approach was employed and data collected and analyzed. The aim was to explore the challenges and the causes of summary writing in the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School.

The case study, as a design, was chosen for this study over others because it gives flexibility in the collection of data through various means. For example, data could be collected through interviews, focus groups, questionnaire, direct observation and even participants’ observation. Furthermore, it has the ability to capture the context and profound reality of participants. The case study is further preferred for its easy-to-use nature. Indeed, it can be used at various points in a research project. It further affords a researcher the opportunity to explore and discover deeper causes of any outstanding area of research. Results that stem from a case study are easy to explain to an audience of any background.

### **3.4 Study Population**

In a research situation, distinction is made between a general population, a target and an accessible population.

The total population that seeks to ensure some information needed is certainly availed is called the general population (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The participants in the general population owe it a duty to share, at least, a single attribute of interest (Asiamah Musah & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). This population is the sum of the target and the accessible populations.

The general population is seen as a virgin population. It is unrefined, untampered with and characteristically intact. In fact, it usually includes constituents whose involvement in the study on hand would retard the progress and /or assumptions. The refinement of



the general population is aimed at doing away with these undesirable elements which have no bearing on the study. The form of population that is obtainable after eliminating the unwanted material is called the target population. This is a group of persons with the desired features relevant to the study in question (Barlett et al., 2001; Creswell, 2003).

As regards the accessible population, it is one that is obtained after all individuals of the target group that will not or cannot be accessed at the period of the study (Barlett et al., 2001). Therefore, accessible population is the final group of persons in a study that data is obtained by either surveying all its members or a sample of it (Asiamah et al., 2017)

Taking into consideration the purposes of the study, the general population was all senior high schools in the country whereas the target group was all students in the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. With regard to the teachers, the general population is all teachers of English at the senior high schools in Ghana whilst the target population was all teachers of English in the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School.

The institution offers five courses (General Science, General Arts, Business, Home Economics and Visual Arts). It has two thousand and eighty (2080) students with a teaching staff strength of one hundred and six (106). There are nineteen (19) teachers of English in the school.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique**

In an attempt to explain sampling, it is the process of picking a few (a sample) from a larger group to represent the basis for estimating or projecting the prevalence of an unknown chunk of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Kumar, 2011).

Random sampling technique was adopted in a bid to select all the student participants for this study. In a case of simple random sampling, each member of the population has both an equal and independent chance of being considered in the sample.

The sampling frame consisted of five (5) classes of Form Two students moving into Form Three in 2023. The students were chosen with ten (10) of them from each of the following classes; 3 science A, 3 Business B, 3 Visual Arts A, 3 Home Economics C and 3 General Arts D using the simple random sampling technique of Yes or No to save time. Even though they had just been introduced to summary writing, they might have heard about it earlier coupled with the expected immediate reaction from the students. One other reason is that, most of the third-year students tried their hands on the WASSCE where they might have tasted summary writing in their second year.

Five teachers of English were earmarked for the study. The said number of teachers was considered using a Yes/No approach to get the five teachers of English for the study.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

The research instruments so-mentioned here refer to the instruments employed in the collection of data where participants are chosen and information is gathered from such constituents. Fully- structured questionnaire and tests were employed in order to gather data on the study participants. In administering the two forms of questionnaire, the researcher conducted personal interviews with the participants. Thus, it was very key for the researcher to explain the content of the questionnaire to them to help in completing the questions. This structured questionnaire contains both the closed and the open-ended questions. A questionnaire may be explained as a list of questions to which respondents are expected to provide answers. In a questionnaire, the respondent reads the question, interprets whatever is expected and then writes down the answers (Kumar,

2011). There are various means by which the administration of a questionnaire is carried out. Under certain conditions, the questions could be read to the respondents and their responses are recorded on their behalf by the researcher. The questionnaire could also be distributed to participants for them to provide their responses. This was the means employed by the researcher in the questionnaire administration. In this research, two different questionnaire was prepared and administered to both the students and the teachers who participated in the study. Each of the questionnaire was bisectonal; Section A solicited information on the demographic background of the participants whilst Section B sought to draw information detailed enough about the challenges associated with summary writing. Additionally, a test in the form of a summary text was equally used as an instrument for data collection in the study. Indeed, a test is a procedure aimed at establishing the quality, performance or reliability of something especially before it is taken into widespread use (Anandan, n.d.). Relatively (Mahmoodi-Sharibabaki,2018), expressed a test to be the systematic process of measuring knowledge, behaviour, skill, attitudes and beliefs according to explicit rules and worth-while comparisons. A passage, the contents of which were familiar to the students, was thoroughly studied, the challenges encountered were exposed, and their responses subjected to scrutiny.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

Validity mainly refers to the height to which the researcher measures all that he means to do (Kumar, 2011). Hence, the validity of the research instruments was endorsed by my indefatigable supervisor who made an in depth proofreading of the questions so as to determine their efficacy. For the aspect of reliability, it may be explained as a relationship to the consistency as well as the stability in any existing research instrument. Reliability of a research instrument clearly refers to the extent that repetitive

measurements made by the said instrument virtually made under constant conditions would produce same results (Kumar, 2011)

A pre-questionnaire administration was carried out on a group of students of the following classes; 3 Home Economics A, 3 Science B, 3 Business A, 3 General Arts C and 3 Visual arts B. These classes would not be used for the real survey. This pre-testing in the form of a pre-questionnaire exercise so-mentioned was, therefore, carried out on only twenty (20) students of the Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School in the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper East Region.

The main focus of the pre-test survey was to fish out the problems that potential respondents may encounter in the course of responding to the questionnaire such as understanding the language used in structuring the questions and the suitability of the meaning of the questions (Kumar, 2011). The few problems that were encountered in the pre-testing were appropriately fixed by restructuring the questions to meet the standard of the students for the sake of clarity. Results of this exercise were juxtaposed with that of the fifty students who took part in the actual and main survey. There was some amount of consistency which further authenticates the research's reliability.

### **3.8 Issues of Ethics**

Issues of ethics with regard to research means submitting to the code of conduct specifically for researchers that has existed over the years for an acceptable professional practice (Kumar, 2011).

It is worthy to note that ethical clearance was sought from the University of Education, Winneba. That apart, the consent of all the respondents in the study was sought with all the requisite approaches. All respondents were made to understand that strict confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were highly guaranteed

### 3.9 Summary

This chapter has produced an in-depth description regarding the methodology used in the current study. The qualitative method design was justifiably used. An account of qualitative data collection and analysis methods was reported. Justifications were given to the choice of the data collection and data analysis methods.

The study site, as well as the research approach in addition to the study population were treated here. Going further, the sample and sampling technique, research instruments, validity and reliability could not be left out of this chapter.

Having gone through the works of the researchers whose products have been under review, it has been observed that all have one similarity; that is, the use of questionnaire. A questionnaire is meant to draw information about the perception people have of an existing issue. It goes without saying that, there is no research that could be conveniently and successfully carried out without the employment of a questionnaire. With regard to the various writers whose works have been considered for review, different approaches have been injected such as the use of qualitative research as well as a combination of the qualitative and the quantitative research and their resultant findings. In this vein, this research would equally employ questionnaire, but would precede it with an oral form in some classes that would not be engaged for the actual research. The results from this exercise would be used to compare with those of the classes that would be considered for the research work. By this, the accessible population would not be engaged in a pre-questionnaire exercise. Such an exercise would involve allowing students to answer a model questionnaire in verbal form in the classroom in the researcher's presence before the actual classes would be allowed to answer the printed questionnaire.

## CHAPTER FOUR

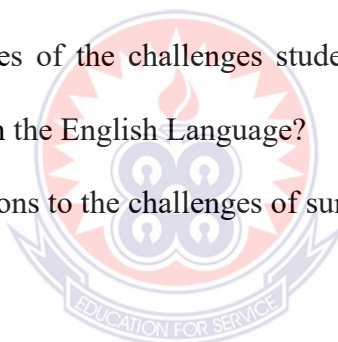
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, presentation of results and interpretation of results obtained from the research instruments on the challenges students face in summary writing in Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. The results presented are derived from the qualitative data analyzed.

The following research questions directed the study:

1. What are the challenges students face in dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language?
2. What are the causes of the challenges students face in dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language?
3. What are the solutions to the challenges of summary writing?



#### 4.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

Based on the responses provided by both students and teachers to the effect of these findings, a procedure was employed in carving out some themes grouped into four under each research question.

##### 4.1.1 Question one: Challenges of summary writing

###### Theme 1. Incapability of locating the central idea

Some respondents stated that they lacked the ability to locate the central idea. This virtually means that they are not able to tell which paragraph or which sentence contains the main idea. By that, they pick whole paragraphs to represent their answers which are highly against the rules of summary writing. They further stated that they had no good

stock of vocabulary which prevents them from getting synonyms to replace words in the passage to be able to produce a reasonable summary.

*Student 1 said, “it is always difficult to pick the main ideas out. In some cases, it is difficult to find the synonyms of another words”.*

*Student 2 said, “how to identify the main idea of the passage is my problem. Additionally, how to change verbs and how to summarize in a simple sentence are all challenges”.*

## **Theme 2. Poor skills in summary writing**

This sub-theme reflected the serious lack of skills acquired by students to come out with a good summary. Even though they sometimes know what is required, they lack the skills that will help them to be able to exhibit the writing tasks in summary writing. It becomes difficult for them to satisfactorily present any appealing end-product (summary task). Most students made comments that indicated their deficiency in skills required for writing a comprehensible summary.

*Student 44 said that “sometimes you may read the passage and understand but how to organize your words without lifting direct sentences is difficult”.*

*Student 43 said that “I don’t always know how to paraphrase my own sentences. Sometimes, I don’t always understand the words and it causes me not to be able to understand the whole content”.*

Some teachers equally pour out their frustrations in this regard indicating the poor skill acquisition by students bringing about their incapability in producing any meaningful summary. For example,

*Teacher 1 stated that “summary writing is a challenge to my students because most of them find it difficult to identify the controlling idea in the passage. Students cannot comprehend and understand passages”.*

*Teacher 3 also stated that “my students have difficulty locating topic sentences. They lift answers verbatim. They cannot comprehend the passage”.*

*Teacher 4 said that “the students have difficulty in identifying the subjects to be used in the summary sentences. Summary is a challenge because students cannot differentiate between main ideas and supporting materials”.*

### **Theme 3. Comprehension difficulties**

The essence of reading is to understand the text. Before a reader will be able to summarize a piece of writing they should be able to comprehend what they read. It is through the comprehension of the text that the reader can either paraphrase or write what has been read in their own words. This is done using fewer words to show the level of the readers understanding of the text in question.

*Student 9 said “the inability of students to understand the passage given to them and point out the main ideas”.*

*Student 7 said “lack of understanding on the summary”.*

*Student 6 said “lack of understanding”*

*Student 41 said “difficulty in understanding the key words used in the passage”*



#### **Theme 4. Structural organization**

The structure of a text is based on the use of words as building blocks. The words put together form sentences. The sentences come together to form the paragraph which are synthesized into a unified whole called the text. Some readers have difficulty arranging words in an orderly manner in order to make meaning. When meaning cannot be got from the sentence then understanding becomes difficult.

*Student 19 said “the difficulty is the organization of the sentence”.*

*Student 23 said “organizing myself in the summary writing is very bad”*

*Student 26 said “sometimes it is the lack of organizing the grammar”*

*Student 42 also said “how to create my own words to tally with the question being asked”.*



#### **4.1.2 Question two: Causes of the challenges of summary writing**

##### **Theme 1. Lack of engagement with the text in question**

A myriad of responses in relation to issues of poor engagement with the text was recognized: some teachers' comments revealed the reality on the ground with regard to the above issue.

*Student 3 said, “the students do not read much hence have a low stock of vocabulary.*

*They have a negative notion about summary writing. They do not practice after they are taught”.*

*Teacher 4 said, “they do not like reading to enhance their vocabulary. They have problems with sentence construction; they do not know what constitute a sentence; they have the misconception that summary is difficult”.*

*Similarly, student 5 stated in her response that “I find it difficult to write a summary because it is hard to prevent direct lifting and change verbs”.*

*Student 1 also opines that “due to the length of the passage, it is difficult to answer the questions understanding the passage and how to summarize a whole passage is a big challenge”.*

*Student 9 poured her frustration by saying thus “the inability of students to understand the passage given to them and for them to point out the main ideas stand as major setbacks. Teachers do not take time to explain it vividly to the students for better understanding.*

## **Theme 2. Lack of time/effective teaching of summary writing**

The above sub-theme unveils what happens in dealing with summary writing as an aspect of the English language that needs much attention. Some students indicated thus:

*Student 43 stated that “because we don’t start it from the foundation. It always depends on the foundation”.*

*Student 37 said that “summary writing is not well understood. Sometimes I understand but I find difficult to write. I am always scared to mess up. The points in the passage are always not understandable”.*

*Teacher 4 said that “students find it difficult to follow the dos and don’ts of summary writing. They have the perception that summary writing is difficult and do not put in much effort in trying to understand it”.*

*Student 26 said that “sometimes the dos and don’ts are confusing us. Sometimes, it is the lack of organizing the grammar and other times it is the lack of understanding”.*

Some teachers registered the following causes of the difficulties experienced by students in summary writing. Virtually, what are stated as the causes of the difficulties are traceable to the teacher who should be able to bring their professional guidance to bear on the students who seek knowledge from them. Hence,

*Teacher 1 stated that “with reading difficulties, mention should be made of the use of wrong preambles/inappropriate use of preambles. Spelling mistakes also count here”.*

*Teacher 2 stated that “most students have poor background in learning. Some who have family issues are directly affected. Most students are completely lazy. The time allotted to handle summary topics is woefully inadequate”.*

*Teacher 5 said that “lack of understanding of comprehension passages is a factor. Also, students do not practice adequately”.*

From the aforementioned responses, teachers are supposed to play a leading role in the dispensation of knowledge in summary by students. The time that summary writing is first introduced to students is not the best. Imagine introducing summary writing in the third year to students. How can they pick up to enable them to write meaningful summary?

### **Theme 3. Poor reading habits by students**

Most students declare that they have poor reading habits which goes to establish the fact that writing summary is a difficulty to them. Reading serves as a panacea to summary writing linked by comprehension. Without reading, there is no understanding. Without understanding, summarizing a text is difficult. As reading is going on, the students need to concentrate on the text to be able to grasp and understanding so as to make meaning out of it. When meaning is got from a text then it could be written in one's own words in a brief and concise manner without compromising the meaning of the original text. Some teachers lamented about students not wanting to read. The student respondents themselves repeated same blaming it on their own lazy nature.

*Student 48 said that, "I feel lazy to learn. I cannot present my answers in summary writing".*

*Student 44 stated that "I cannot even read"*

*Teacher 1 stated that, "students cannot comprehend or understand passages."*

*Teacher 4 also stated that, "the students have difficulties identifying the subjects to be used in summary sentences."*

*Teacher 5 said that, "students cannot even comprehend the passage."*

In relation to this study, Galla et al reported that the design of the book, the approaches used by teachers in the teaching of summarization as well as the notion held by students about summary writing are enough repelling factors of students' challenges in summary writing in our schools. Insufficient provision is made to the aspect of summary writing unlike the enormous attention given to comprehension, essay writing and grammar (Gala et al, 2019).

#### **Theme 4. Limited vocabulary and language skills**

Readers in general do face the challenge of limited vocabulary and language skills. They find it difficult to use words to replace clauses and phrases. Some, most of the time, cannot avoid repeating words used in the summary passage. They therefore lift direct sentences from the summary passage as their responses to the questions posed. For example,

*Student 10 said “the avoidance of modifiers is a major difficulty. As well, avoiding direct sentence lifting is an issue to grapple with coupled with the avoidance of repetition of words from the summary passage”.*

*Student 15 also said thus “I have a problem with paraphrasing my words. I also have difficulty changing verbs as much as possible.*

#### **4.1.3 Question Three: Overcoming the Challenges of Summary writing**

In every human situation where challenges exist with their attendant causes/sources, there should be existing solutions to help improve upon what is expected and required. Below are some suggested solutions in this regard.

#### **Theme 1. Practicing answering summary questions often**

Based on the statement that “practice makes perfect”, many of the student respondents lay bare that it was due to inadequate practice on the summary aspect of English that caused the challenges in that area. They, therefore, expressed that regular practice would help them to become very familiar with the summary writing environment. This should be complemented with teachers’ guidance and support in all forms to sustain the needed interest in this monstrous, yet necessary aspect of the English Language

learning. Some students as well as teachers had the following issues in the forms of suggestions.

*Student 48 said that, “there should be regular exercises on summary writing. Teaching students how to answer summary questions rather than mindless lifting of material can be of help.”*

*Student 39 stated that, “It is beneficial to engage in summary-related tasks to bring about proper understanding.”*

*Student 9 stated that, “teachers should concentrate more on giving exercises to students to try their hands and they should point out the mistakes made by the students. Such students should also make the corrections necessary when their mistakes are known and try their hands on more summary practice exercises.”*

*Student 28 stated that, “to improve my performance, I must solve summary questions. I must also ask questions under summary writing.”*

*Student 37 also stated that, “I need to have frequent practice on summary writing. Equally, it is important that I ask questions when I am not clear about certain aspects of summary writing.*

*Student 8 said that, “students should be taught how to write summary. They should keep on practicing how to write summary until they are perfect and confirmed as such by the teachers.”*

*Student 27 stated that “I need to study hard to possess enough vocabulary. There is the need for me to avoid laziness. Practicing or solving summary questions always and always can help me improve. Also, I have to avoid sleeping in class and rather read my books.”*

A few teachers had the following to say thus:

*Teacher 5: “Students should do well to practice summary writing regularly. Teachers should try to work at improving student’s knowledge in comprehension through regular practice. This is because regular attention to comprehension enhances summarizing texts which would have been very difficult to handle.*

*Teacher 1: “Teachers should guide students to strengthen their reading habits. They should, as well, practice more on summary writing since practice makes perfect.”*

## **Theme 2. Seeking Guidance from Teachers**

In Ghanaian parlance, it is often said that “if one does not know, another teaches them”. Therefore, in our academic situation, teachers today are to serve as facilitators. Without guidance, the ignorant go astray and finally get lost. A teacher and some students presented their opinions on the above issue in regard to this research work.

*Student 1 said that, “teachers should do well to guide students and give them details in summary writing. This activity should be repeated weekly and assignments given with students put in groups for their studies in summary writing.”*

Another student said the following:

*Student 3: “In my view, to improve my academic performance, in summary writing, I think I should be engaged by my teacher to answer questions on summary writing at least, five times a week.*

### **Theme 3. Employment of more pragmatic methods in teaching summary writing**

The teaching of summary writing needs to be given a lot of attention instead of being considered a rush-over aspect of the English Language. There are situations whereby some teachers wait until the third year before introducing summary writing to their students. As a useful aspect of the English Language that is employed at any level of one’s life, it needs to be approached at the foundational level for learners to feel it in any aspect of their learning instances. In this regard, one of the student respondents had this to say:

*Student 17: “There should be adequate explanations from the teachers to make things clear to students. The strategies should be made simpler and explained in more detail.”*

*Student 13 opined that “summary writing should be taught repeatedly. Students should be given more examples and practice. With practice, they get used to it like class exercise when it comes to application in any situation.”*

*Student 15 said that, “teachers should give the students more exercises on summary writing to try their hands on. This will help them to get used to the summary writing demands.*



*Student 42 stated that, “the teachers should take their time and explain to us. We should be doing summary writing at all times.”*

*Teacher 2 stated that, “teachers should adopt different methodologies in their lesson delivery”*

*Teacher 4 said that, the teachers should teach sentences to the students well before introducing the summary and also engage them more in summary writing.*

#### **Theme 4. Summary writing should be introduced to students early enough**

As regards the above point, two students and one teacher held the view that summary writing should be introduced to students in the latest part of their Junior High education or the earliest part of the Senior High education.

*Students 13 and 19 said that, “summary writing should be introduced in the basic level before they get to the upper level.”*

*Teacher 4 said that, “summary writing should be introduced in primary 6”*

These findings go to authenticate earlier findings on this subject in question. For example, Ababio (2020), stated that there was a lack of engagement with the text; students were unable to identify main ideas in a text; there was lack of summary writing skills and strategies as well as lack of comprehension skills.

Similarly, Lin and Maarooof (2019), stated in their findings that summary writing is a skill which is difficult to teach, learn and evaluate. This is a confirmation that there are challenges in summary writing whether it is taught, learned or evaluated. This should

call for more pragmatic and practical approaches to alleviate the verocity of it in order to help learners to find the easiest way to the venture.

According to the same Lin and Maarooof (2013), and Nambiar (2007), summary writing can be time - consuming and energy-sapping not only for its cognitive nature, but also for the fact that it calls for both reading and writing skills. This further communicates that nothing easy is laborious. Things which are done easily do not consume time or energy. It, therefore, goes without saying that summary writing is an issue of grave concern by persons in academia especially in the field of the English Language.

#### **4.2 Summary**

In conclusion, the challenges of summary writing identified in this study revolve around four main themes: incapability of locating the central idea, poor skills in summary writing, comprehension difficulties, and structural organization. Students expressed difficulty in identifying the main idea, lack of vocabulary and synonyms, poor skills in summarizing, and comprehension issues. Teachers also highlighted their frustrations with students' lack of understanding, inability to locate topic sentences, and difficulty in differentiating between main ideas and supporting materials.

The causes of these challenges can be attributed to various factors. Lack of engagement with the text, poor reading habits, inadequate teaching of summary writing, and limited vocabulary and language skills were identified as the primary causes. Students' negative attitudes towards summary writing, limited practice, insufficient guidance from teachers, and ineffective teaching methods were also mentioned as contributing factors.

To overcome these challenges, several solutions were suggested. Students emphasized the importance of practicing summary writing regularly, seeking guidance from teachers, and employing more pragmatic teaching methods. They also highlighted the

need for early introduction of summary writing to build foundational skills. Teachers, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of regular exercises, providing clear explanations, using different teaching methodologies, and strengthening students' reading habits.

In summary, addressing the challenges of summary writing requires a combined effort from both students and teachers. Regular practice, guidance, and improved teaching methods can enhance students' skills in locating the central idea, improving comprehension, and organizing their summaries effectively. By implementing these suggestions, students can overcome the identified challenges and develop better proficiency in summary writing.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives details about the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further investigation.

#### 5.1 Findings

As regards the objective of identification of the problems individuals, especially students, encountered in handling summary writing tasks in English Language, the following challenges featured prominently: inability to locate central ideas, poor acquisition of summary skills, low vocabulary acquisition and absence of comprehension skills.

The researcher also found out that, the majority of Senior High School teachers begin teaching summary writing lessons in the third year, which the researcher finds concerning. This approach appears to be ineffective as students are still performing poorly in both external and internal exams, leading to negative attitudes towards the subject. Despite being able to identify students' errors, teachers are not doing enough to assist them in overcoming their challenges.

With regard to the objective of finding out the causes of the problems related to summary writing, the following were revealed: little time allotted to teaching summary writing by teachers, ineffective teaching by instructors with poor reading habits as the major cause of poor performance in summary writing. The issue of giving more practice to students on summary writing was found to be the antidote to the challenge of poor summary writing. The research employed an explanatory approach to investigate the

difficulties that students encounter when writing summaries at Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. The study aimed to answer three research questions:

1. What are the challenges that students face when dealing with texts in summary writing in the English Language?
2. What are the reasons for these challenges in relation to summary writing in the English Language?
3. What are the solutions to the challenges of summary writing?

The research involved a sample size of fifty-five (55) participants, consisting of five English Language teachers and fifty students from the school. Data was collected using questionnaire and tests that were designed to address the research objectives. The subsequent sections of the study will address the issues raised in the research questions.

### **5.2 Implications of the Findings**

The findings of this study have several implications. Firstly, all areas of the English Language should be given equal attention in the syllabus, textbooks and timetable. Additionally, the study suggests that teachers play a crucial role in helping Senior High School students master summary writing skills. Therefore, teachers should use effective teaching strategies to help students develop the necessary skills for paragraph development and summary writing.

### **5.3 Pedagogical Implications of the Findings**

The researcher aims to answer the question of what should be done and by whom to help students achieve competence in summary writing and the English Language in general. The stakeholders that should be considered include policymakers, syllabus designers, textbook writers, and teachers.

### **5.3.1 Implications for policymakers**

Policy makers should incentivize teachers to conduct research on areas where their students are struggling. This may involve creating a database of these studies, from which findings can be synthesized and incorporated into textbooks. This approach would inspire and motivate teachers, as well as help to identify problem areas before they become more significant issues. Participation of teachers in research is crucial, as they have first-hand experience of the practical and situational problems that arise in the classroom. However, teachers may be hesitant to open up to researchers, as they may feel that their work is being judged. It is difficult for researchers to observe students' daily progress or use investigative tools in the classroom without the cooperation of teachers, and funding may be necessary to encourage teacher involvement in research. If research findings from teachers are available, they can inform the revision of syllabi.

### **5.3.2 Implications for syllabus designers**

The syllabi for both JHS and SHS provide objectives and topics for teachers to cover, but including the philosophical underpinnings of the subject areas would help teachers appreciate the selection of certain aspects of the subject, and motivate them to work harder with equal enthusiasm.

### **5.3.3 Implications for Teachers**

Teachers should take a proactive approach to finding solutions to students' problems and learn to motivate them to overcome negative perceptions of certain subjects. Therefore, teacher involvement in research is invaluable in academia. They need to have a positive attitude towards the subjects they teach and not just teach them because they are part of the curriculum. It is important to educate teacher trainees about the philosophy behind teaching different subjects, so they can appreciate their importance

and teach with enthusiasm. This will also enable teachers to help students who may be disinterested in certain subjects. Encouraging teachers to conduct research in the classroom will help them to understand the challenges in the teaching and learning process.

#### **5.3.4 Implications for Textbook Writers**

There should be a direct connection between syllabus designers and textbook writers. For example, the JHS syllabus includes summary writing from year two, but the official English textbook for Junior Secondary Schools does not have a section on summary writing. The only reference to summary writing is the last question in the comprehension section of unit nine, where students are asked to suggest a suitable title for the passage used in the unit. There are twenty-four units in both Book Two and Book Three, but neither book includes formal instructions on summary writing.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Teachers should have a positive attitude towards the subjects they teach and should be educated on the philosophy behind the subjects to appreciate their importance. Teacher trainees should also be trained to conduct research in the classroom to understand the problems faced in the teaching and learning process.

There should be a direct link between syllabus designers and textbook writers to ensure that textbooks cover all aspects of the syllabus. Textbook writers should provide handbooks to help teachers who may be weak in summary writing, and exercises in the textbooks should be tailored to meet the examination requirements.

The textbook for Junior Secondary Schools should include a section devoted to formal instructions in summary writing as required by the syllabus. Textbook writers should also provide exercises that go beyond meeting examination requirements.

To improve students' performance in summary writing, teachers should use a student-centered approach, and positive learning classrooms to optimize learning and build a cohesive classroom community. Dictation drills should also be encouraged in schools to facilitate good spelling skills among the students.

To improve students' writing and spelling skills, teachers should provide more opportunities for students to express themselves in English, such as creating a space to display their writing and providing a box for students to write down their concerns about the school and classroom environment. Additionally, it's important for Senior High School teachers to teach effective English Language examination strategies and emphasize summarizing skills in comprehension. Encouraging extensive reading of good texts can also help students appreciate and learn the language's structure and other aspects. Therefore, stakeholders like PTA's, District Assemblies, GETFUND, and old students' associations should provide reading materials.

Teachers should also develop a friendly relationship with their students to promote positive attitudes towards learning the English language. Lastly, well-resourced school libraries can encourage reading and enhance students' prior knowledge, and teachers should use feedback models with clearly stated criteria to correct students' summary texts for better achievement

## **5.5 Conclusions**

With reference to the findings, summary writing has stood tall and continues to be a major challenge in the English Language especially for students who have it as part of their assessment to higher levels of education. Sometimes, students say it is the determiner of their academic advancement. Therefore, inculcating good reading habits in learners from the early stages would help them if they grow with such a reading habit.



As well, adequate allotment of time to the teaching of summary would do a lot of good as students would have ample time to learn and to practice.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Interview Questions for Students

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering information from you in order to enable the researcher to identify the cause(s) of the much sang poor performance of students in summary writing. Your opinion is, therefore, sought solely for academic purposes. Your responses would be treated with the strict confidentiality it so much deserves.

ID NUMBER: ..... DATE: .....

#### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS

1. GENDER: Male  Female  Please, tick where applicable.
2. AGE [ in years]: 11-20  21-30  31-40
3. CLASS AND PROGRAMME: .....
4. RELIGION: Christian  Islam  Traditional  Other  If other please, specify.....
5. What is the medium of communication in your school? English Language   
Ghanaian Language   
Non-standard English (Pidgin)
6. Which aspect of the WASSCE English Language paper do you like best?  
.....

#### B. INFORMATION REGARDING CHALLENGES IN SUMMARY WRITING

7a. In your opinion, is summary writing important? Yes  No

b. Why do you think so?

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.....  
.....

8a. Do you have challenges in summary writing? Yes [ ] No [ ]

b. If yes, what are the challenges? Please state as many as you can.

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.....  
.....

c. What do you think are the causes of your challenges in summary writing in 8a?

9. Do you like your teacher's way of teaching summary writing? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please give as many reasons as possible for your answer.

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10. Does your teacher engage you in any summary practice exercise?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Please, proceed to 11 and 12 if your answer is 'yes'.

11. How often does your teacher give you exercises on summary writing?

Daily [ ] Weekly [ ] Fortnightly [ ] Monthly [ ]

12. Averagely, how many exercises in summary writing does your teacher give you in a week?

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13a. Do you agree that there are strategies in summary writing? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, state as many strategies as possible.

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

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

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16. In your opinion, at what level should summary writing be introduced?

JHS 3 [ ] SHS 1 [ ] Tertiary [ ]. Give reasons for your answer.

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## Appendix B: Interview Questions for Teachers

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering information from you in order to enable the researcher to identify the cause(s) of the much sang poor performance of students in summary writing. Your opinion is, therefore, sought solely for academic purposes. Your responses would be treated with the strict confidentiality it so much deserves.

ID NUMBER.....

DATE.....

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS

Please tick [ ] where applicable.

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female: [ ]
2. Rank: .....
3. Age (in years) 21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50
4. Marital status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ] Widowed [ ]
5. Religion: Christian [ ] Islamic [ ] Traditional [ ] Other [ ] If other, please specify.....
6. Educational Level: Ist degree [ ] M phl [ ] MA [ ] Other [ ] If other , please specify.....  
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7. Number of years of teaching English at present school .....
8. Which year group of students do you teach? .....

INFORMATION ON CHALLENGES OF SUMMARY WRITING

9. How is summary writing a challenge to your students in your view? Give as many reasons as possible

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10. In your opinion, is summary writing necessary at all? Explain.



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11. How in your opinion, is summary writing a challenge to you as a teacher? Explain.

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12. At what stage/year is summary writing introduced to your students?

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13. How do you assess your students' understanding of summary writing? Explain

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14. How are you able to identify your students challenges in summary writing?  
Explain.

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15. How do you manage the challenges facing your students in summary writing?  
Give at most two reasons for your response.

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16. What is/are the cause(s) of the difficulty/difficulties faced by your students in  
summary writing? Please, state as many as possible causes.

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17. How does poor summary writing negatively affect your students in their examinations? Give two instances

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18. In your candid opinion, how can the difficulty faced by your students in summary writing be overcome? State at most two ways

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19. How often do you give your students exercises on summary writing?

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20. In your opinion, what is /are the cause(s) of the difficulty/difficulties encountered by your students in summary writing?

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