

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PARAGRAPH WRITING IN THE ESSAYS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS: THE CASE OF SHS IN THE SAVANNAH REGION**



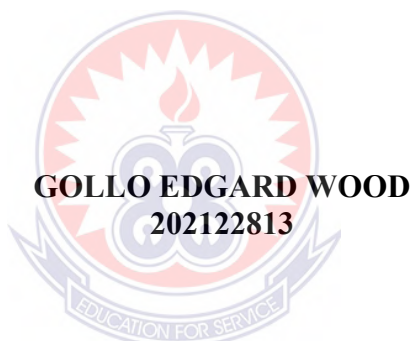
GOLLO EDGARD WOOD

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

2022

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PARAGRAPH WRITING IN THE ESSAYS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS: THE CASE OF SHS IN THE SAVANNAH REGION**



**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Languages Education, submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Teaching English as a Second Language – TESL)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

SEPTEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Gollo Edgard Wood**, declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for any other degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

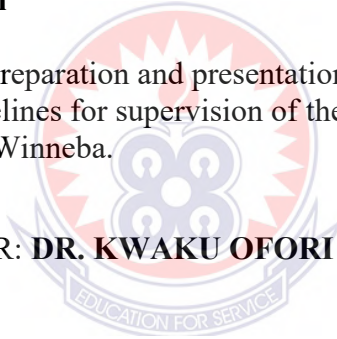
Supervisor's Declaration

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **DR. KWAKU OFORI**

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God, my parents, Mr. Gollo Venacios & Mrs. Gollo Cordilia, my lovely wife, and my lovely children, through whose encouragement and support I have come this far.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength and knowledge to conduct this research work.

I wish to also express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kwaku Ofori for his essential contributions through supervision of this work. I am very grateful for his constructive criticism and suggestions in refining my ideas and approaches. In fact, he had been very instrumental not only in directing me for the best of results, but also painstakingly going through every bit of my write up to ensure accuracy. May the Lord Almighty bless you.

Finally, I owe a deep sense of appreciation to my parents Mr. Gollo Vernacio and Gollo Cordilia, my lovely wife, Mrs. Sulley Alice, my lovely children, Gollo Elton Zunuo, Gollo Vanessa Mwintome and Gollo Elvin nuokpem and my very good friend, Mr. Kenneth Maalteng Dibkuu for their helpful contributions for this project work to be carried out successfully. I am equally thankful to my family members and friends for the moral support they gave me during this exercise. May God bless you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

GATE	Ghana Association of Teachers of English
ESL	English as A Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
SHS	Senior High School
SSSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination



ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to assess students' paragraph writing problems. The study was carried out in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School with special reference to final year students in focus. Case study design and purposive sampling technique were used to address the problem. A sample size of (280) was used. The study employed data collection instruments such as document analysis, open ended questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The study identified problems of organization, unity, adequacy, topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences and capitalization as the major paragraph writing problems students encounter. In addition, factors that were affecting students' paragraph writing were found to be students' related factors such as lack of knowledge of strategic use, students' writing apprehension, lack of vocabulary and lack of regular practice, and teachers' related factors such as teachers' ways of giving feedback. Therefore, since paragraph writing is a skill that could be improved through sufficient practicing, students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School should be given the opportunity of learning and practicing features of good paragraphing to effectively use them to write paragraphs.



CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The study examines effects of paragraph writing in the essay of Senior High School students in Ghanaian public Senior High Schools especially St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School and Bole Senior High School, the challenges facing students in writing paragraph in the essay and the strategies that can be adopted to solve students' challenges in paragraph writing in essays. This chapter is organized along the following thematic headings-background of the study, statement of the problem, general purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and organization of the study.

1.2 Background to the Research

Generally, language is an important tool for communication and socialization and has been a basic necessity in all aspects of human life. As a member of a social group and as far as socialization is concerned, one's ability to function effectively and efficiently in carrying out the various roles that one needs to execute greatly depends, first of all on one's language skills. Their ability to speak the language competently, fluently and effectively, helps to go about their activities easily. In order for one to be able to use a language effectively, one needs to acquire a considerable level of competence in the four fundamental language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hence, the level of competency and proficiency of a person in a particular language is determined by these four basic skills. This implies that the level of proficiency of a person in any language can be negatively affected if the person has a problem with any of the four fundamental language skills.

English language is widely used by people of different socio-cultural backgrounds. As a result, it has become a unifying force and also a vehicle for international communication. This is because the language makes it possible for people of diverse language backgrounds to communicate and participate in economic, political and cultural activities far beyond their local areas. In Ghana, English has assumed a central position in our national life. According to Lewis *et al.* (2014) the country is a multilingual country in which about eighty languages are spoken. Among these languages as the authors further explained, English, which was inherited from our colonial masters, is the official language and lingua franca. To break the language barrier, English has become an effective medium of communication in our multilingual setting. Therefore, acquiring a high proficiency in English in Ghana is essential. It is for this reason that Senior High school students in particular and Ghanaians in general should be well equipped with the rules of the language so that they can function effectively and efficiently both in Ghana and around the world.

In Ghana, the system of education is organized in three levels namely: basic, second and tertiary cycles. The primary and the Junior High Schools constitute what is known as basic education. The Senior High School is the second level of education in Ghana. The basic language skills such as: reading, writing, listening and speaking are introduced at the basic level. This implies that by the end of the first cycle of education, the products of the school system should be able to express themselves and socialize in English, but many of the students however, come out inarticulate, inhibited and insecure because they cannot express themselves in speech and writing. It is essential that these skills are improved considerably to give students the confidence to communicate in the language. The general aim of teaching English as a subject at the Senior High School (SHS), among others, is to improve students' level of proficiency in English usage and

their ability to communicate with other users of English so as to make them function efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the importance of a high level of competence in English in a country such as Ghana, especially for the purposes of education and communication, is a well-recognized fact.

Writing has been a significant skill in language production and development. Its importance increases when it comes to writing in English language which is mostly used extensively for global mediation of knowledge. According to Mahboob (2014) the performance in language development is subject to improvement in writing skills. A text of an effective English as a second language writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured, and of course interesting. Nevertheless, writing is often considered merely a part of teaching and learning grammar and word order, which as a result underrates the nature and importance of writing, and for that matter affects its growth. Undeniably, the development of this skill calls for considerable attention for its learning and teaching from the very early phase of language education. Nunan (1989) argued that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity which requires the learner to have control over various factors. These factors, according to Dar and Khan (2015) vary from academic background and personal interest of the writer to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena.

Writing a paragraph requires an overall sense of organization which demands that each sentence should fit well within this organizational framework. In a well-written paragraph, ideas and sentences are arranged in a clear and logical manner so that these ideas and sentences can be perfectly unified by the main idea of that paragraph. The more the written paragraphs are coherent and cohesive the more they will be able to convey clear and meaningful message to the readers. Apart from this, students should

be able to use a connected series of words and sentences which are grammatically acceptable. Unless students arrange words in at least their minimum acceptable order, the chosen words may not be able to convey the intended message meaningfully to the readers. A good paragraph can therefore, be achieved when a topic sentence is intelligently chosen; and the knowledge of choosing a good topic sentence for each paragraph helps students to arrange the sequence of their information in a logical order.

With regard to the conventional approaches to the teaching and learning of a language; writing skills and for that matter, paragraphing is mostly considered as secondary skill. As a result, it does not get enough attention compared to speaking, reading, and listening. According to Silva (1997), the most prominent teaching approach during the 1950s placed so much emphasis on oral rather than written proficiency. Writing skills in particular were neglected during Audio-lingual period. As attested by Raimes (1983) during audio-lingual period, speaking was considered as the central element of language teaching with writing receiving very little attention in the teaching and learning of language.

However, Foley and Thompson (2003) as cited in Misrak (2007:6), emphasized the importance of writing in second language learning by arguing that second language learning is not only learning the oral languages that is, speaking and listening but it is important to consider how to learn to communicate through writing. The importance of English language in the day-to-day activities of the citizenry of Ghana cannot be overemphasized. English language serves as the official language and the common medium of instruction right from primary one and even sometimes below through all higher levels of education. It plays a very vital role in the medium of communication among people with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In the same vein,

students must be proficient in English so that they will be able to pursue any programme in the tertiary institutions (Ghana Education Service, 2007).

In recent times, there has been an increasing awareness of the need of becoming familiar with the necessary writing skills. It has become a necessity in our current curriculum/syllabus at our Senior High Schools and even at the preparatory levels, as an important productive skill through which meaningful messages or ideas can be transmitted effectively. As students go through the Senior High School education, they are expected to acquire further writing skills such as paragraphing and composition. In accordance with the syllabus of Senior High School system in Ghana, students need to write compositions on a wide range of topics and ensuring good paragraphing. At this level, students are required to practice good paragraph writing than merely engaging in writing at sentence level or phrase of words level.

As expected, students are supposed to compose paragraphs in their essay writing with good elements and use sentences which are grammatically correct within the paragraphs to communicate effectively in writing. It is generally expected that students at the Senior High School level should be introduced to the four basic language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is therefore, necessary that these skills should be improved upon significantly not just for the benefit of excellent academic performance or to raise the level of proficiency in the use of English in students and their ability to effectively and efficiently communicate with other users of the English language but also, to prepare them to function effectively later in life.

As far as errors in the learning of second language are concerned, they are unavoidable outcome of the second language learning process. Hence, students in Senior High School make errors of one form or another in different degrees of frequency because of

so many factors. There is no good teacher who has the intension and interest of improving the learning process of students that will intentionally continue to pay no attention to the students' errors if such a teacher wants to assist the students to really improve upon their standard of proficiency in the English language. The researcher is therefore, motivated to conduct this study because as a teacher, it will help to identify the writing problems of our students and as to be expected, the findings and recommendations of the study if properly implemented, will help to improve the overall standard of English language proficiency in the country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There are several problems faced by students in Senior High Schools in writing essays. As English is a second language in Ghana, writing is considered to be one of the most challenging aspects in English as far as a second language learning is concerned (Hyland, 2003). In order to produce good essays, good paragraphs are pre-requisites. However, writing in a foreign language is not easy for most students. Writing requires a lot of concentration to get successful results or products. Hyland (2003) asserted that students continue to encounter a lot of difficulties in essay writing which needs serious attention.

Hyland (2003) further explained that students have a problem connecting their ideas even though they may already have an outline of their topic. Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) also opined that effectively developed paragraph or any text must fulfill at least features such as: subject-verb agreement, tense forms, appropriate voices, article, preposition, mechanics, spelling, and word choice. In developing their essays, students still make mistakes using word forms, such as present tense and past tense. Therefore,

researchers are interested in conducting classroom action research to investigate the basic cause of students' inability to produce acceptable paragraphs in essay writings.

According to Bello and Oke (2011), the trends in Ghanaian candidates' performance in May/June 2006-2009 WASSCE in English language only improved from 27.8% to 49.4% but declined to 43.91% in 2009. Consequently, the trend indicates that over 50% of Ghanaian Senior High School graduates are not able to gain admission into the tertiary institutions because by requirement, one must obtain a credit pass in English Language in order to have access to tertiary education. The chief examiners' reports for Ghana over the years have also underscored a consistent decline in students' performance in both the May/June and the November/December WASSCE and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) in the English Language Paper 1, which tests candidates' writing skills (<http://www.waeheadquartersgh.org/> 2009). The cause of this problem is not far-fetched; it is believed to be the students' inability to write their composition effectively as far as paragraphing is concerned.

The general perception of many Ghanaians is that the standard of English of students in our Senior High Schools (SHS) has fallen considerably. The proponents of this view quickly compare the language competence of Senior High Schools (SHS) students to those who hold the "O" Level or Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) which existed some years back to arrive at their conclusion. The researcher, who is a teacher, believes that mere rhetoric towards addressing the poor standard of English in Ghana is not the solution; we must as a nation go beyond the recognition of the problem.

Several research works have been carried out on different topics with regard to writing difficulties in students in Senior High Schools. According to Ferris and Hedgcock

(2005), research and practical experience have demonstrated overwhelmingly that one cannot become a proficient writer in any language without developing a wide range of literacy skills which include the ability to properly understand written text efficiently, fluently and accurately.

Notwithstanding the numerous studies that have explored students' writing difficulties, there is very little number of empirical explorations on paragraph writing in the context of Senior High School students' essays. Evidently, most of the available literature focus on investigating errors and difficulties based on the writing product rather than the output. Also, almost all the previous researchers conducted their researches at the university, college and Junior High School levels. There is therefore, a gap as far as students' difficulties in paragraph writing in the essay of Senior High Schools' is concerned in the Bole district.

The researcher, after interacting with students and making critical observation of students' performance in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School in the Bole district, realized that a lot of the students performed poorly in composition writing due to lack of understanding of the features of good paragraph writing. Hence, the researcher in the current study seeks to outline some of the causes of students' difficulties in paragraph writing, the reasons why they encounter such difficulties, and what teachers can do to help students overcome their problems in paragraph writing. It is against this background that research is needed to assess the paragraph writing problems of students in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High Technical School in the Bole district of the Savannah Region.

1.4 Purpose

The general purpose of this study is to ascertain the problems in paragraph writing in Senior High School students in Ghana. The purpose of the study is not just for this research work to be added to the already existing large collection of literature as far as errors analysis is concerned but to identify the fundamental causes of errors in students' writing regarding paragraphing in the area of essay development. Not only this but also the study shall provide realistic suggestions which will help to improve upon the falling standard of English language in the country. Again, the study is targeted at getting our students, teachers, and all the concerned stakeholders of education in Ghana enlightened on the real issue on the ground with regard to the problem of paragraph writing of our students in the nation's Senior High Schools. The researcher is certain to a reasonable level that if all these concerned and relevant players in education are put in the picture about the magnitude and seriousness of the problem, the right measures will be put in place to turn around the trend towards improving the proficiency of English language in our Senior High Schools in the country.

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study include the following:

- 1) To investigate some of the major problems students in Senior High Schools encounter in paragraph writing.
- 2) To identify some of the reasons why students face problems in paragraph writing in Senior High Schools.
- 3) To ascertain some of the methods that teachers can use to help students in Senior High Schools overcome their problems in paragraph writing.

1.6 Research Questions

Regarding the above objectives, this study sought to find solutions to the following research questions:

- 1) What are some of the major problems that confront students in Senior High Schools in paragraph writing?
- 2) Why do students face problems in paragraph writing in Senior High Schools?
- 3) How can teachers help students in Senior High Schools to overcome their problems?

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is obvious that studies that are interested in the acquisition of both first and second languages are very much interested in how competency in the language is developed. It is therefore, essential that at every stage of the learner's language development, we should be worried about his/her progress. The study is therefore, very important and concerns the learner, syllabus designer, textbook writer and the teacher as well. Subsequently, the study will provide useful information so that a well-informed decision can be taken towards improving upon the level of competency in the English language of our students in the Senior High Schools.

The study will also provide both the syllabus designer and the textbook writer with valid and reliable input because when the root cause of the errors is brought to light, it will give a fair picture on how to deal with such problems associated with the learning of the second language. Having identified the fundamental cause of the problem associated with the learning of the second language, the study will provide the teacher with the way forward on how to appropriately correct the students' errors because with

the knowledge of why such errors are made, the teacher will be in a better position to device effective measures to eliminate them.

Again, the study will provide an essential tool for remedial teaching of the English language in our Senior High Schools. Not only these but also, the findings of this study will offer adequate knowledge about the detailed difficulties that confront learners and this will obviously be a useful guide for the teacher to focus on those areas that are standing as thorns in the flesh of the students in the study of English language. In other words, the data that will be obtained and compiled at the end of this research will help the Senior High School teacher to be able to identify the areas that need reinforcement and emphasis for the purposes of improvement in the competency level of a Senior High School study in the learning of English language.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized along five-chapter sections. Chapter one is mainly the introduction of the research. The introduction to the study is then made up of the background of the study and other related information about the research such as the statement of the problem, general purpose, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter two deals with the literature review and covers a detailed discussion of a theoretical framework that underpins the study. It also examines previous studies which have been embarked upon by other researchers in the domain of paragraph writing and the possible sources of errors.

Chapter three offers the details of the methodology which covers a comprehensive discussion of the research design, population of the study, mode of sampling techniques, data collection procedures, the instruments used in data collection and the

data analysis procedures. Chapter four presents a more comprehensive analysis and detailed discussion of the data collected for the study. It focused on data presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings. Chapter five serves as the end of the research and therefore, provides the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature based on the following thematic areas: concept of writing skill, importance of writing skills, theoretical framework, approaches in teaching writing, the concept of paragraph writing, characteristics of paragraph writing, features of Students' Problems in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Paragraph writing, causes of students' problems in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) paragraph writing, and strategies for helping Students in developing paragraph among others.

2.2 Concept of Writing Skills

Writing is one of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in language learning. It is the system of written symbols, representing the sounds, syllables or words of language with different mechanisms which include capitalization, spelling and punctuation, word form and function. Writing is generally seen as the most challenging area in learning second language (Jusun & Yunus 2017). It is a means of expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings about a subject matter. In writing, we need to express ourselves as clearly as possible and in a more grammatical manner in order to compensate for the absence of certain features of spoken language. By writing we should be able to flow out a burden occupying our mind and offer our ideas and concepts to others.

Fundamentally, writing is based on appropriate and strategic use of language with structural accuracy and communicative potential (Dar & Khan, 2015). According to Nicker-son, Perkins, and Smith (2014) writing is a cognitive process that tests our

memory, thinking ability and verbal command to successfully express the ideas because proficient composition of a text indicates that one has a good understanding of the English language. Hence, learning how to write appropriately has gained considerable importance and attention for the last two decades due to two factors which are: its use as a tool for effective communication of ideas, and the extensive research work carried out in this area to ascertain the various issues that are encountered by second language writers (Dar & Khan, 2015).

2.3 Importance of Writing Skills

Writing may be a laborious and even dreaded exercise of attempting to place thoughts on paper while developing mastery over the rules of writing, such as spelling, citation format and grammar. Effective writing is a skill that is grounded in the cognitive domain. It involves learning, comprehension, application and synthesis of new knowledge. Writing also encompasses creative inspiration, problem-solving, reflection and revision that result in a completed manuscript. According to Amalia and Syahrul (2018) fecundity in writing skills require students to skillfully take advantage of the structure of language.

Writing skills are said to be productive because they are formed from the process of integrating what has been heard, talked about and read, then expressed again in written form. Someone who has writing skills can express their thoughts and ideas to achieve certain goals and objectives. The idea can be in the form of facts, experiences, observations, research, thinking or analysis of a problem. Cocuk in Harmoon (2018) attested that writing skills are very crucial because they help to enhance students' performance. Writing skills can be a method of expression for those who cannot or feel comfortable expressing themselves verbally.

Also, more international linguists are promoting writing as their field of specialization. According to Princess and Syahrul (2019) the importance of writing skills for students is that writing is an activity which facilitates the learning process of students. This is because more international students are pursuing their degrees in English speaking countries. Dini and Tressyalina (2017) also made it clear that writing skills can be applied to improve students' creativity such that through writing activities students will be able to convey knowledge and information that they have to the general public. This is so because more articles and journals are being published in English.

Furthermore, due to this age of globalization; the world seems to be a smaller village because of the perception of unlimited communication. Hence, all members of global institutions, for their own benefits in terms of education and business cooperation, have to stay connected with one another. In order to meaningfully express thoughts and opinions apart from oral interaction, writing is considered crucial. In terms of ESL or EFL instruction, writing is necessary because it helps students to learn. First of all, it reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that students are taught in the classroom. Not only this but also, when students practice writing they have the chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned. They can take the act of writing to the next stage by way of doing business with it. It is also anticipated that when students write, they become involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eyes, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. As students struggle with what to put down next or how to put it down on paper, they often discover something new to write. This helps them to broaden their horizon of thinking.

Generally, writing is important for the purposes of communication. It creates a reliable communication channel between the writer and the reader. Writing is needed for the purposes of transfer of messages, letters, knowledge, and also to take exams and to maintain the process of learning. Due to the immense importance of writing as outlined above, English writing is included in all the syllabuses of Ghanaian basic, senior high and tertiary schools. It is therefore, necessary to incorporate teaching of writing skills in our Senior High Schools as it is an important skill in communication in this globalized world.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theories are in no doubt very important in research works because they help the researcher to outline the course of action in conducting the research work. By reason of this fact, this study is supported by the theories as described below. It is very important for the teachers to know and understand theories that are relevant in teaching writing because it will allow the teachers to properly implement research-based practices (Wright & Hibbert, 2015). According to Hodges (2017) the following theories are crucial in teaching writing.

2.4.1 Cognitive Process Theory of Writing

Basically, writing involves a critical thinking process. In order to write proficiently, one needs to use the mental process such as brainstorming, planning and organizing, and all of this requires creativity. Therefore, cognitive process theory of writing aims to teach students to use mental processing in producing a piece of writing. This theory of writing is popular than other writing theories as it has many benefits. This theory was introduced by Flower and Hayes (1981) through observations of students' writing and made efforts to introduce the theory of cognitive processes involved in composing and

to lay groundwork for more detailed study of thinking processes in writing. This theory requires that “Writers have to go through a process of thinking before writing, a higher-order organizational structure takes place during these procedures, composing involves setting objectives, and authors generate macro and micro-objectives to finish the writing task (Flower & Hayes 1981). In short it focuses exclusively on the mental writing process.

2.4.2 Relevance of the Theory

The cognitive theory was relevant to this study in a sense that, it is focused on gaining insight into the writing process through the writer’s thought processes. The theory seeks to outline the writer’s choice-making throughout the writing process, and how those choices constrain or influence other choices down the line. Writing is seen as an embedded process by which writers go through a brief sequence of planning, translating and reviewing in the service of scrutinizing sentences. Ideas can be changed in order to fit the paragraph structure. Cognitive process theory of writing basically talks about a writer’s mental process as the writer sets out to develop a composition. This mental process involves different activities including plot creation, editing the draft, reviewing the draft, and many others. The theory therefore, deals with the outcome of each of such activities as the writer makes attempts to create coherent paragraphs in a composition.

2.5 Approaches in Teaching Writing in ESL Classrooms

Teaching approaches, according to Hoque (2016), refers to a set of principles, beliefs, or ideas about the nature of learning which is translated into the classroom for the purposes of achieving the objectives of teaching and learning. Students in ESL classrooms hail from different background and proficiency level as a result of various factors, one of which is exposure to the target language. This may even vary based on

their location, urban or rural, family background. Even in certain situations, students have mother tongue and first language before acquiring the third language. It is, therefore, important for ESL teachers to employ a very systematic and dependable plan for each lesson in the classroom to actively engage every student in the teaching and learning process so that the lesson objectives can be successfully achieved. Hence, besides the methods and techniques teachers usually depend on in lesson delivery, approaches that are suitable to the needs of the students in ESL classroom are essential.

The achievement of communicative proficiency is enhanced through oral and written communication which are usually referred to as the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Listening and reading are categorized as the receptive skills, while speaking and writing are referred to as the productive skills. The achievement of communicative competence is indicated by mastery of the four language skills. In the teaching of English in Senior High Schools, the adequacy of teachers' knowledge on the methodology of English language using communicative approach is by all standards necessary.

Writing approaches that can be used in the classroom in teaching first language users are different from those that are needed to be applied in teaching the second language learners. Researchers had formulated many theories and approaches to take care of ESL learners' writing needs. Generally, these writing approaches might have gone through a lot of changes over the years to be suitable enough to enable the second language learners to become good writers. Some of the approaches that have been identified by practitioners of ESL learners include product, process, genre approach and process genre approach (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). Hence, good approaches in teaching writing in ESL classrooms might help students improve upon their writing skills.

2.5.1 Product Approach

The product approach of writing places emphasis on the finished products of the writing work rather than the process (Steele, 2004). Usually, the product-based approach stands for a writing process which aims to see the end product. More often than not, students imitate a model text to produce one of their own. In other words, students mimic a model composition provided by the teachers in order that they will understand the content so as to be able to produce one of its kind. For example, in the writing classrooms, teachers may provide examples or models composition for the students to learn from and based on the models, students are most likely to produce similar compositions.

In any case according to Steele (2004), students may need to adhere to some steps in order to benefit from this approach.

- 1) Students need to read the model composition and take note on the distinctive features of the composition which are organization of ideas, the use of language and mechanics of writing.
- 2) Students have to perform controlled practices to exercise the elements outlined in the model text.
- 3) Students must make efforts to mimic the model essay by organizing a collection of pre-set thoughts to suit the model.
- 4) Students should perform the task by using their skills, sentence structures and different levels of vocabulary so as to compose the expected composition.

The writing teacher who uses the product approach in the classroom should be concerned to see that the end product of the process is readable, grammatically correct

and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and all that is necessary. Some of the advantages of this approach are that students start learning how to use particular pattern-product methods in writing composition systematically, especially in writing narrative, descriptive and persuasive essays. Product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher. Therefore, as teachers teach writing in the ESL classroom using the product approach of writing, it will enable the students to master the concept of paragraph writing as accurately as possible.

2.5.2 Process Based Approach

Another approach to the teaching of writing in the classroom is the process-based approach. This approach offers great importance to the process of getting the end product. The process approach of writing places emphasis on the process of writing rather than the written final products. It is, therefore, important for teachers who employ this approach in the classroom to continuously encourage students to have a sense of purpose and audience, while writing about a certain topic.

There are four processes involved in the writing process; planning, drafting, revising and editing. This approach gives writers the opportunity to move back and forth to improve upon their writing. It is obviously a cyclical process in which writers may return to pre-writing activities, for instance, after doing some editing or revising. It also facilitates creativity when the writers make efforts to create their own compositions. As a result, this approach is often seen as a dynamic approach. Process approach is popular due to its wide range of benefits. For example, students can depend on this approach to enhance their writing abilities in the classroom as scaffolding occurs (Maarof *et al.*,

2011). Also, it makes it possible for feedback to be given by teachers and peers and as such offers an opportunity for students to become good writers.

According to Maarof *et al.* (2011) the feedback from the teachers is regarded as a major requirement for improving students' essay writing ability. Not only this but also, it stresses on thinking process and this helps to promote creativity. Notwithstanding all these great advantages, process-based approach has its disadvantages. It consumes a lot of time, focuses on the process rather than focusing on structures and grammar. As can be seen from the above-mentioned approaches to the teaching of writing, the main difference between the two approaches is in the focuses they put on writing and the manner they expect writing to be taught. Teachers who therefore use process-based approach of teaching writing in the ESL classroom are more likely going to help their students improve on their paragraph writing ability.

2.5.3 Genre Based Approach

Genre writing tries to see writing from a different perspective. It looks at how it is written and how it is analyzed. This approach of writing is extremely different from the conventional perspective about writing (Dirgeyasa, 2015). This means that this approach sees writing as pre-dominantly linguistic however, it emphasizes that writing differs from the social context in which it is produced. Genre based approach gives importance to various types of writing and text types and interconnects with social needs. This approach has some advantages including students being able to learn variety of sentence structures for different text types. Obviously, the prime objective of this approach is knowledge and certain genre and the communicative reason which will help writers to communicate with the community.

There are some advantages of this approach including the fact that it exposes students to different types of text types or genre. The approach expects that learners should be exposed to many instances of the same genre to develop their ability to be able to write a particular genre (Elashri, 2013). Also, genre-based approach is concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to achieve coherent, purposeful prose writing since every writing has its purposes to the readers (Tuan, 2011). Basically, genre approach is good for beginners since model text is often given to assist learning. This practice would help to reduce the anxiety among the learners. There are however, some limitations of this approach which include the fact that students lack knowledge of language structure and grammar to effectively reach the target audience and learners basically usually focus on the product rather than the process. Also, genre approach underrates the student's ability. However, when teachers employ the Genre Based Approach in teaching writing in the ESL classroom, the approach provides knowledge by exposing students to different types of text types or genre which helps writers to communicate effectively with the community.

2.5.4 Process Genre-Based Approach

According to Rhalmi (2018), process genre-based approach is a combination of all the three approaches described above because it focuses on the process of writing, taking account of knowledge of social context and purposes of text in genre writing, and observes characteristics of texts as it is done in product-based approach. Presently, process writing is given much attention in ESL classrooms. This is because this approach helps students to produce different kinds of writing by employing the four steps outlined in the approach. It is also realized that by employing these approaches,

teachers are able to adopt different types of strategies to make the teaching and learning of writing in second language classroom fruitful. Some of the strategies that are very helpful include modeling, shared writing, guided writing, and interactive writing (Lan *et al.*, 2011). This approach is therefore, very suitable for students in Senior High Schools. Nevertheless, it has some limitations including careful and tedious planning, and consumes a lot of time in planning and in the teaching process. Irrespective of the limitations of this approach, it offers the teachers the opportunity to help their students to know the fundamentals of writing good paragraphs.

2.5.5 Process Product Approach

Process product approach is also a combination of product approach and process approach. This approach can be employed to develop students' writing skills by mastering product approach prior to process approach. This approach expects that students should master writing mechanics and gets themselves acquainted with sample texts or model essays at this stage so that they will be able to proceed with process writing. And this involves developing writing by recognizing and adopting all the stages in process writing which are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing to put together one's own story. This approach also has some shortcomings which include its complexity, the time that is needed and the cost involves in achieving the expected result.

However, a study that was conducted by Hassan and Akhand (2010) in analyzing the impact on learners' quality of the product and process approach to learning revealed that the students performed better in paragraph writing by combining product and process approach. The blending approach developed their writing skills. This implies

that when teachers adopt this approach of teaching students writing in ESL classroom, it will help the students to develop the skills of writing good paragraphs.

2.6 Importance of Teaching Writing Skills

Employing the right writing skills is very important because it produces an effective outcome. According to Walsh (2010) writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. The author further stated that if students cannot express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate effectively with their colleagues, employers and every other person out there. Much of professional communication is done in writing: proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and many others. These are part of the daily life of a college student or a successful graduate.

It is important to choose the most appropriate approach in the classroom because if a wrong approach is used, it is most likely to demotivate the teachers as well as the students. Nevertheless, the approach depends on the goal set by the teacher. For instance, beginners who have very limited proficiency should be exposed to product-based approach as they need model or examples to begin their writing with. Without an approach, the writing classroom will move in multiple directions and at the end of the day, the goal set for the lesson will not be achieved. Writing approaches are therefore, important to help the writer to meet the goals of the writing. Also, employing different types of approaches enables students to be exposed to various types of methods for their writing journey. This will eventually offer the students the opportunity to identify and be able to use the correct approach in future writing based on their writing purpose. Hence, students who acquire a variety of approaches end up writing or producing quality paragraphs in their essay writing.

2.7 The Concept of Paragraph Writing

According to Omid and Abdul (2020) a paragraph is basically a unified piece of writing. It is unified because it expresses one central idea which is expressed in a topic sentence. It is a group of closely related sentences that contains one idea. A paragraph therefore contains only one topic sentence. Generally, teaching writing in Ghana is quite challenging because English is used here as a foreign language. It is even more complicated due to the interference of the mother tongue (L1). Good writing skill, in any case, consists of several elements including composition, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Learners of the English language are expected to acquire all of these elements to sharpen their proficiency in the language. In the context of English Language teaching in Ghanaian Senior High Schools, the achievement of communicative competence has become the concern of the English curriculum. At the level of philosophy, the competence-based curriculum still adopts the theory of language as a means of communication. According to Betti and Mahdi (2021) the general aim of language teaching in Senior High Schools is about ensuring that students acquire communicative competence which encompasses grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence.

A research conducted by Megaiab (2014) in Indonesia discovered that tenses are a completely new thing for students. Somehow, they might find it difficult and begin to feel frustrated when learning them because regular and irregular verb systems do not exist in Bahasa, the mother tongue of the learners. To overcome this issue, teachers are encouraged to use certain teaching approaches in order to assist their students to develop their writing skills. According to Ahn (2012), there are basically two approaches in teaching foreign language learners writing skills. These are process-based approach and genre-based approach. The process approach-based focuses on

developing learners' linguistic skills through pre-writing processes which include planning, drafting, editing, and revising while the genre-based approach is aimed at helping learners to understand that writing has a purpose and usually focused on analyzing the situation based on the context. Generally, writing takes into account the place and time of occurrence.

A paragraph indicates that the sentences it contains are related and some-how distinct from the other sentences in the text. Thinking critically about how paragraphing affects the delivery of a message can help authors to enhance the clarity and organization of their writing. Mostly, a paragraph starts with an indentation or a space between the end of a paragraph and the beginning of a new paragraph which means there is a blank space at the beginning which shows that a new subject matter, concept or a different point of the same subject matter is being introduced. The sentences within a paragraph should link up so that the readers do not find gaps among the sentences. The components of the paragraph should be strongly combined so as to produce one complete meaning in the paragraph. In addition, effective sentences involve more than starting with capital and stopping with a full stop or period. The word or words in a sentence must make sense by way of expressing an idea, perception or feeling and this should be clear enough to stand alone. Generally, writing involves the building of larger units from smaller ones. This means that writers use words to form sentences, sentences to make paragraphs, and paragraphs to produce compositions as letters and reports.

2.7.1 Structure of a Paragraph

Students must structure their paragraphs effectively so as to develop their discussions successfully and to be able to show the relationships between the ideas they want to put across. According to Walters (2000) a paragraph has three main components which are;

a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. According to the author the topic sentence in most cases is the first sentence of the paragraph; it usually states the paragraph's central idea or argument. More often than not, a topic sentence introduces a new idea and/or transitions from the previous idea by indicating the relationship between the two ideas. The supporting sentences then provide explanations, evidence, examples, and other important details related to the paragraph's main concept that the write wants to put across to the reader. The author further explained that paragraphs are typically ended with concluding sentences which provide the reader with a good sense of closure of the paragraph. A concluding sentence may take many forms including a brief summary of the paragraph's information or a statement about the implications of the information in the paragraph.

Walters (2000) posited that the length of a paragraph depends on the concept to be developed. Hence, the divisions of paragraphs and lengths are determined by the concept developed in each paragraph. Divisions between paragraphs may be created for a number of reasons including to address a new concept, to compare or contrast information, to introduce a counter-argument, or to give readers a chance to process information before moving on to a new paragraph. Even though there are no stringent guidelines for paragraph length, each paragraph can be written long enough to fully develop a concept however; it should not be so long that readers get tired, bored, or confused about what is being discussed in the paragraph. Writing paragraphs of an effective length is therefore, a matter of being considerate to the audience.

2.7.2 How to Write a Paragraph

Writing a paragraph is one of the fundamental steps of the writing process (Academic Skills Office, 2020). There are series of steps that the learners need to know so that they

can follow to produce a master piece of writing in different contexts such as at the Senior High School level. According to Academic Skills Office (2020), there are series of steps for writing paragraphs. These are outlined below.

- 1) **Brainstorming:** Brainstorming refers to a group creativity technique that is usually used to find a solution to a specific problem. This is accomplished by gathering and recording new ideas from members in the group. Students should think carefully and organize their ideas for their paragraph before they begin writing. Brainstorming is an idea-generating technique which mainly functions as an organizer of thinking, idea collector as well as a developer. This can therefore be referred to as a pre-writing activity stage.
- 2) **Planning:** After students have outlined their ideas and probably put the ideas into note form, they should then plan how to refine those ideas towards producing a composition. Planning functions as an organizer, a planner and a classifier of the ideas gathered from the brainstorming exercise. It serves as a useful summarizing technique that students can use to facilitate receiving the information flow in the EFL classroom as far as paragraph writing is concerned. This exercise will also help to establish paragraph coherence which gives the reader meaningful insight about the main topic of the paragraph.
- 3) **Drafting:** Drafting involves writing the words of what you intend to produce. Gaber (2003) also pointed out that as part of the writing process, students are most likely to write multiple drafts of their composition. Each rough draft improves upon the previous one. The first draft should be seen as a further means of discovering ideas about what one wants to carry out. The final draft is simply the last draft that you submit as your composition produced.

- 4) Revising: This is the stage where students are expected to look at their organization, main points, support for main ideas, examples, reasons, and connections between ideas. This is supposed to be the heart of the writing process, where the meanings of ideas generated are clarified (Academic Skills Office, 2020). Students should see this stage as a point where they should refine their ideas, discover new connections and explore them more deeply as possible so as to communicate effectively with their audience.
- 5) Editing: According to Academic Skills Office (2020) editing could be viewed as the process of correcting sentence structure, word choice, spelling, punctuation, grammar and capitalization in a piece of writing. At this stage, students should check their paragraphs for mistakes and do the necessary corrections. Editing is done to come up with the final version for publishing.
- 6) Publishing: This is the final stage of the writing process. This is the point where students produce a final copy of their paragraphs to submit. At this point, the writings that the students have revised and carefully edited may be ready for publishing. Since writing is communication, students are expected to read their writings aloud to the class, to share their finished product with their colleagues so that such works can be celebrated. This idea of sharing students' writing with their class helps students to develop sensitivity to their audience and confidence in them as authors.

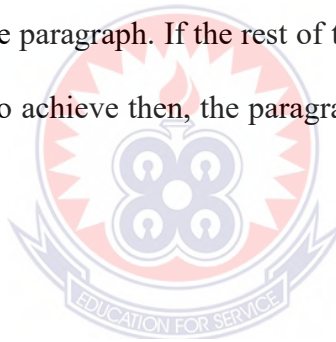
2.8 Characteristics of a Paragraph

According to Champa and Sasikumar (2010) a paragraph refers to a collection of sentences such that all of those sentences relate to one main idea or topic. Effective paragraphs as stated by Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) are usually expected to have four main characteristics which include a topic sentence, unity, coherence, and adequate

development. The author posited the importance of each of four main characteristics of a paragraph as indicated below.

2.8.1 Topic Sentence

Beginning a paragraph with a topic sentence is one of the best ways to achieve clarity and unity in one's writing. The function of a topic sentence is to describe what the paragraph is all about, such that the reader has clear expectations about what will follow. An effective topic sentence according to Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) typically contains only one main idea. The supporting sentences of the paragraph then help to develop that idea more fully, offering supporting points, details and examples. In a well-developed paragraph, one should be able to anticipate the type of information contained in the rest of the paragraph. If the rest of the paragraph does not fulfill what the topic sentence seeks to achieve then, the paragraph will lack unity, coherence and adequate development.



2.8.2 Unity

Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) explained that unity refers to the extent to which all of the ideas contained within a given paragraph stick together in a way that is easy for the reader to understand what is being discussed in a particular paragraph. When the writer decides to change to a new idea, an idea that is not consistent with the topic sentence of the paragraph then, the writer should begin a new paragraph. Unity is important in paragraphing because it helps the reader to closely follow along the writer's ideas as expressed in the paragraph. Usually, the reader expects that a given paragraph will deal only with one main topic hence; when a new paragraph begins, it signals the reader that the writer is moving on to a new topic.

2.8.3 Cohesion

Coherence is closely related to unity as it refers to the extent to which the flow of ideas in a paragraph is easily understood by the reader. Hence, when a writer suddenly changes the main ideas or topics within a paragraph, confusion often occurs in the mind of the reader. This is because the reader is unable to follow the pattern of flow of ideas that the writer attempts to present. To achieve coherence as the authors further elaborated, a writer needs to show how all of the ideas contained in a paragraph are relevant to the main topic.

2.8.4 Adequate Development

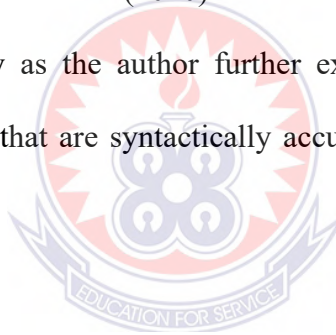
The authors, Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) explained further that a paragraph should be properly developed so that the idea that is intended to be presented to the reader can be well expressed. A paragraph is adequately developed when it describes, explains and supports the topic sentence. If the main aim of the topic sentence is not fulfilled or if the reader is left with questions after reading the paragraph, then that paragraph is not adequately developed. In most cases, a paragraph that consists of only two or three sentences is under-developed. A good rule of thumb to follow in developing a paragraph is to make sure that the paragraph contains at least four sentences which explain and expatiate on the topic sentence such that on reading, the reader should know exactly what the paragraph is all about. This means that the controlling idea and any other supporting ideas within a paragraph should be sufficiently explained or illustrated. Every other supplementary idea within the main idea in the paragraph according to the authors should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea.

2.9 Paragraph Writing Problems and Difficulties

Paragraph writing has been a challenging task because many practical and theoretical issues are embedded in the process (Alsamadani, 2010).

2.9.1 Lack of Cohesion and Unity

Generally speaking, writing is seen as a difficult skill for both native and non-native speakers alike because writers are expected to be able to balance multiple issues in their writing such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary and mechanics which means they should be able to use the right punctuation, spelling and capitalization (Negari, 2012). In fact, writing in a second language is more demanding because according to Alsamadani (2010) it is a very complicated, challenging, and difficult process. Usually as the author further explained, writers are expected to produce written samples that are syntactically accurate, semantically acceptable and culturally appropriate.



2.9.2 Poor Content and Organization of Ideas

Apart from these difficulties, it is also noticed that the emphasis of writing instruction for many years has been on the product rather than the process (Ahmed, 2010). The author further explained that producing a coherent and well-organized piece of writing is a challenging task. Again, the author elaborated that this challenge is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts such as the structure, organization, lexis and grammar differ from those of other languages. Hence, language teachers place more emphasis on grammar and punctuation rather than content and organization of ideas. Many students are therefore, constantly exposed to the rules of writing and grammar without developing their ability to express their ideas in the form

of paragraphs. For instance, Ahmed (2010) investigated the organizational problems of Egyptian students using a mixed-method research design. In that research, two tools were utilized to collect the data; questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The results of the study revealed that students had problems in their English writing. It was noticed that they had difficulties in writing coherent introductions, thesis statements, topic sentences, concluding sentences and conclusions. Cohesion in paragraphing was a serious problem to these Egyptian students because they have difficulties in using reference, substitution, ellipsis and cohesive ties.

2.9.3 Lack of Writing Skills

Also, Alfaki (2015) conducted a study on English as a Foreign Language on Sudanese students. The study adopted a descriptive research method. The study sample was made up of 20 English major students. The students were asked to write compositions of about 150-200 words. The compositions were marked and reviewed twice. The findings of the study revealed that the students had various writing problems including language problems in morphology and syntax, cognitive problems in developing and organizing ideas in paragraphs and problems in punctuation and spelling. The study recommended extensive reading practice, free writing practice exercises and the use of note-taking strategy as ways to improve the students' writing skills.

2.9.4 Lack of Good Topics Sentences

Another study was conducted by Rass (2015) to investigate the problems faced by Palestinian students majoring in English as a Foreign Language teaching to develop well-written paragraphs. The researcher analyzed the accumulated data for the last fourteen years. The data included written samples of 205 students. The analysis of the

samples revealed that the students encountered a lot of difficulties in paragraph writing. It was discovered from the accumulated data that students face many problems in writing good topics, supporting details by adding examples and reasons and concluding sentences.

Generally, lack of adequate vocabulary, ability to generate ideas and insufficient organizational style, use of punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors with poor grammar usage are some of the problems that students mostly encounter in developing acceptable, independent and readable texts of any kind as far as paragraphing is concerned for academic purpose (Haider, 2012). Evidently, it is clear that all over the world students at various levels of the academic ladder encounter series of challenges in writing acceptable paragraphs in their compositions, and students in Bole district in the Savannah Region of Ghana are in a similar situation which is what calls for this study to be conducted.



2.10 Causes for Students' Problems in English as a Second Language (ESL)

Paragraph Writing

Generally speaking, writing is an important but difficult skill to acquire, a communication skill which is essential in today's information society (Hailemariam, 2011). The author further explained that writing is even more difficulty when a foreign language is involved. This is because the differences in the language structures, the way by which thoughts are expressed, the writing styles, and other culturally varying factors usually affect learners in the writing of foreign language, he added. Regardless of the various approaches to the teaching of writing adopted from the different teaching methods, tackling English as Second Language (ESL) as far as paragraph writing is

concerned is still one of the worrying problems for learners in a country such as Ghana Mensah (2014). Hence, this long existing challenge that ESL learners are faced with in developing good paragraph is connected with some factors. In writing an academic text, ESL students more often than not face some problems. Related to the influencing factors of academic writing problems, Hailemariam (2011) conducted research and the finding indicated that the causes of students' problems in ESL paragraph writing are inadequate exposure of target language, lack of practice, problem in writing apprehension, lack of appropriate feedback, lack of vocabulary, and carelessness. These factors as emphasized by Hailemariam (2011) are explained below.

2.10.1 Inadequate Exposure to the Target Language

One of the factors that contributes to the difficulties of learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL) in writing good paragraphs is the inadequate exposure of the learners to the target language. According to Pineteh (2013) a lot of students do not have access to good or favourable environment to practice their English both in writing and speaking outside the classroom. This indicates that learners do not have that opportunity to practice and develop paragraphs in English language as frequently as possible. This results in the production of very weak students from basic school level to the Senior High Schools with most of them disliking the writing segment of the English language (Bilal *et al.*, 2013). When students unfortunately have limited exposure to the language they are learning, they are obviously going to face a lot of challenges including a big possibility of committing errors in paragraphing in the language.

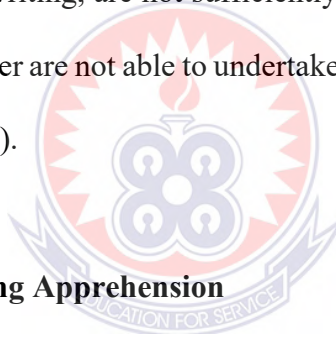
In a study with young learners in the Netherlands starting English lessons at age 4, Unsworth *et al.* (2015) found that after two years of instruction, amount of classroom exposure (more than 60 minutes of weekly classroom exposure versus 60 minutes or

less) was a significant predictor of children's outcomes in receptive vocabulary and their speaking and writing skills. Also, Chandrasegaran (1979), conducted a study among Malay learners who learn English as second language. She found a strong relationship between the extent of exposure to English and proficiency in acquiring English language. The assumption was that urban learners, by living in an environment where the chance for practicing English was more available, experienced wider contact with English accordingly became more proficient in the target language, both in speaking and writing.

2.10.2 Lack of Practice

Converting competence into performance requires practice. According to Gonye, Mareva, Dudu, and Sib (2012) learners must take the responsibility for their learning if they really want to gain sufficient knowledge about what they seek to know. Gonye, Mareva, Dudu, and Sib (2012) further explained that practicing paragraph writing is very crucial for the purposes of acquiring competency in the English language. After all, the best ways to learn any skill is to practice it. Again, adopting the most effective approach to teaching ESL writing is not enough until learners practice enough writing. Writing is a skill acquired only through practice Ahmad *et al.*, (2013). According to the Ahmad *et al.*, (2013) writing is not a natural process unlike oral language development. In contrast to oral language development, writing does not materialize naturally from the interactions with parents and other adults. It is, like dance or carving according to the Ahmad *et al.*, (2013), an activity that could be improved upon only through constant practice.

Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) conducted research to investigate the problems and factors that hampered Pakistani undergraduate students in their writing skills. Their research found that the problems of students' difficulties in academic writing include writing anxiety, lack of practice, lack of ideas, L1 reliance, lack of motivation and ideas, teaching methods, and lack of organizational structure. Butt and Rasul (2012) also opined that learners should not be satisfied with mastering the form of passive voice only; they should have personal experience using the passive voice. Teaching simply involves directing learners to practice the language skills. However, learning is about personal experience which requires active and regular engagement of the learner. Notwithstanding these facts that have been given above, students in ESL classroom especially in the area of writing, are not sufficiently provided with the needed writing activities and for that matter are not able to undertake the necessary practiced on regular basis (Butt & Rasul, 2012).



2.10.3 Problem of Writing Apprehension

Writing apprehension is an overwhelming sense of anxiety associated with a feeling of dread when facing a writing activity (Vanhille, Gregory, & Corser, 2017). Vanhille, Gregory, & Corser (2017), explained that the feeling of writing apprehension may develop for numerous reasons including evaluation fear, lack of experience and confidence, or poor writing outcomes in the past. Onwuegbuzi (1997) conducted a study to find out the academic writing difficulties of graduate studies who enrolled in research methodology courses. The study was a qualitative study. The study findings revealed that anxious students were concerned about the quality of the overall of their wiring, they mostly develop feelings of anxiety towards their academic writing which negatively affect their writing performance.

This means writing apprehension is the feeling of nervousness about the process of writing. Learners therefore, need to know that writing anxiety can clearly and negatively affect their writing performance. This is to say that when students are given a writing activity they begin worrying about writing a paragraph as psychological rather than assuming it as logistical. This indicates that writing anxiety is characteristic to productive language particularly of writing. From the above context according to Vanhille, Gregory and Corser (2017) scholars have become more sensitive to writing anxiety and of late, target language relation has captured more attention.

2.10.4 Lack of Appropriate Feedback

Mike (2008) conducted a study on the effective of corrective feedback on writing accuracy and improvement. The finding indicated that corrective feedback had positive effect on writing accuracy. It is important that attitudes towards writing and its issues are changed. It is crucial that teachers employ strategies to elicit ideas from students to be penned down on a piece of paper to help enhance their verbal ability. In addition to this, instant and critical feedback needs to be given on their output, so that their confidence is lifted up (Haider, 2012). In most cases, learners gain benefits from sufficient writing practice and revisions on their drafts to produce a final piece of writing. While they carry out these processes, they mostly depend on feedback either from a teacher, peer, or from themselves (Ferguson, 2011). The feedback that learners receive from a source or a multiple of sources, offers them vital information about what is good and what needs to be improved upon in order that they can fit in and use the feedback in their revisions and in the final product of their writing.

Most EFL/ESL writing teachers would in no doubt agree with the statement that teacher correction feedback is a necessity and forms part of any writing activity. Feedback on the outcome of learners' writing can make learning more effective and meaningful, as noted by Ferguson (2011). The author explained that feedback is considered as an important approach to enhance learners' development to function as independent learners so that they can monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own learning. Feedback is therefore, a source of information about the learners' strengths and weaknesses on their writing to do better. The more feedback learners receive about their performance, the better they understand what they need to do to correct their mistakes.

Accordingly, the method of feedback provision could also be another factor that affects their achievement in writing good paragraph. This is because if the feedback provided for the learners is not creative it will not inform them what they are expected to improve upon and how to come out with the expected improvement (Nicol, 2010). This means that learners will be able to benefit from their learning when a given feedback is focused on the specific problems of the learners' work and demonstrates at the errors with its way of correction.

2.10.5 Carelessness

A study conducted by Abdellah (2000) on Sudanese university students found that the students were not able to make correct use of written discourse properties, which eventually reduced the overall writing quality of their paragraphs. The findings of Abdellah (2000) further indicated that the average writing of student was characterized by a variety of coherence breaks such as misleading paragraph division and irrelevance as a result of carelessness. Since there are various kinds of reasons that account for the

difficulty in learners writing good paragraphs in EFL/ESL, learners may sometimes become careless in writing or even speaking in the target language (HersHKovitz *et al.*, 2011). According to HersHKovitz *et al.* (2011) the authors this act of carelessness may happen as a result of lack of motivation in the learner. Lack of motivation may arise due to the fact that the materials to be taught and the manner by which these materials are presented to the learners do not suit the learners.

2.10.6 Lack of Vocabulary

According to Farooq (2012) in order for students to write quality paragraphs students' lexical knowledge or vocabulary is critically important. When students have the confidence to use a variety of words, they will be in a better position to communicate effectively with their readers. Research was conducted by Dong (1998) to probe 169 non-native graduate thesis and dissertation writers from two U.S.-based institutions. The study findings showed that students struggled with lexical issues and difficulties in getting the appropriate vocabularies when writing. The finding further indicated that majority of the L2 English participants stated that vocabulary is significant in academic writing.

Insufficiency of words usually creates a breakdown in the correct use of terms resulting in poor communication. Farooq (2012) notes that grammar is the most difficult area for ESL writers. Farooq (2012) further explained that students face challenges in the use of correct sentence structure and paragraph development, and in creating coherent text. He cited an example that the students may know how to build sentences, but when applying them in written expression they face a lot of difficulties. Lack of adequate vocabulary

as Farooq (2012) stated leads to strained expression in ESL writing which is also a challenge that students face in learning ESL writing skills.

Nevertheless, writing allows learners to explore thoughts and makes these thoughts visible and concrete (Afful, 2011). Afful (2011), further posited that writing encourages thinking and facilitates learning since it motivates communication and helps to make ideas available for reflection. The author added that when ideas are written down, they can be examined, reconsidered, added, rearranged, or changed. Learners who are novice however, need to practice writing that involves reproducing learned material in order to learn writing conventions of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical agreements. Even though writing has been considered by many as a difficult task, students cannot by any means do away with it.

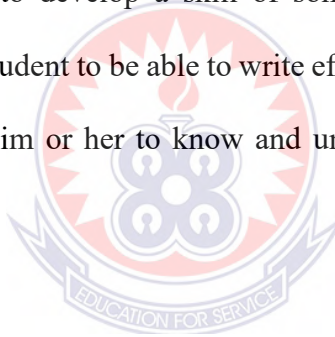
This is because, writing serves as an essential feature in the academic lives of students and for that matter, the relationship between academic literacy and Senior High School education cannot be overemphasized by scholars (Afful, 2011). The problem of writing becomes very much compounded when students are made to express themselves in English Language which is a foreign language. The reason is based on the fact that most students lack the skills to communicate effectively in English (Adjei, 2015). English language is often considered as a global language, and for the people of Ghana, it has been adopted as the official language and as a medium of instruction in Ghana in the various schools.

The antecedent to the adoption of English as an official language can be traced to the coming of the European traders and missionaries to Ghana as well as the ascendancy of

the English Language across the globe (Adjei, 2015). This is to say that the wide spread of English language across the globe and the functions that it carries as the mean of instruction in most schools, both basic and tertiary as well as its role as the language of intra and international trade, global politics and communication have left Ghana with no option than to adopt English as its official language in order to be considered as one of the significant stakeholders in the global village since the language has come to stay and for that matter has become a modern Ghanaian artifact (Adjei, 2015).

2.11 Strategies for Helping Students to Develop Paragraph

Generally, it is difficult to develop a skill of something without the assistance of somebody. Hence, for a student to be able to write effectively about a subject, he or she needs a teacher to help him or her to know and understand the process of doing so (Galante, 2014).



2.11.1 Teach Students the Subject Matter and Purpose of Writing

According to Galante (2014) students need to know the subject matter and learn the specific vocabulary, the text structure and the language features that will help them write successfully in that subject area. It is also important for students to be conscious of the purpose of their writing. For this to be accomplished, students need help from their teachers to be able to explore their potential regarding the purpose of their writing (Chin, 2000). The assistance from their teachers will lead them to develop quality paragraphs in their write-up. Chin (2000) further added that students should not be blamed for their poor writing skills; rather teachers should endeavour to support them to develop their skills.

Teaching students the subject matter and purpose of writing as a strategy in helping students in developing paragraph is supported by the finding of a study conducted by Manchón and Roca de Larios (2011) illustrated how their L2 writer participants acquired an awareness of audience and multidimensionality through rigorous writing tasks during an EAP class (English for Academic Purposes). Additionally, their findings showed that students' instances of meaning-making through writing gave them opportunity to attention to, reprocess, and reinforce subject matter they had allegedly grasped while also assisting them in identifying content areas they had not fully understood. Eventually, it helped the students to understand the subject matter and purpose of their writing activities, and thus helping them to write better.

2.11.2 Students Should Learn Through Imitation and Discovery

Hence, Chin (2000) commented that to help students improve upon their writing potential, teacher's role and way of teaching are very essential. For any success to be realized as Chin (2000) mentioned, students as well as teachers must recognize writing skills as skills which transcend the boundaries of subject matter. Writing should be an inter-disciplinary skill; it should be as much a part of the social studies or science curricula as of English. Teachers of English language as well must make conscious and sincere efforts to improve our students' writing skills (Hyland, 2000). According to Hyland (2000) students should learn, through imitation and discovery, modes of discourse suitable to an assignment. Hyland (2000) further stated that teachers should also do well to expose students to the basic grammatical and rhetorical patterns, stressing structure initially and content and style later.

An analogy can be made between the athlete and the writer. The athlete first imitates other athletes. He plays the game, learns new rules, and develops his own style. The writer does the same. He imitates models, learns new rules and develops his own style as his proficiency increases. In both cases, style is developed only when the basics have been mastered. The finding of research conducted by Meltzoff (2007) in developmental psychology indicate that imitation exists in early infancy and grows in parallel with multiple cognitive abilities throughout adulthood. Imitation serves as the root for infants and children to understand the mental states of themselves and others, and therefore to develop social cognition. It helps infants and children acquire experience and learn cognitive and motor skills such as language and emotional expressions and subsequently develop communication skills.

2.11.3 Recognize the Innate Phenomenon

Research conducted by Van Gog et al. (2009) found that imitation is an effective and efficient way to learn, and has identified several factors influencing infants and children's effective imitation in learning. Infants and children imitate more and learn more effectively in dyadic interactions. They also learn significantly better through face-to-face communicating with live speakers than listening to audio recordings (Van Gog et al., 2009).

Concrete goals and behavioural objectives are the cornerstones of an effective writing, as they will provide the teacher with valid evaluative and diagnostic tools and permit the student to achieve success (Watt-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). Watt-Taffe and Truscott (2000) made it clear that teachers must first tap the abundant resources students have brought with them to class. Watt-Taffe and Truscott (2000) further explained that all of

the students have mastered the syntactical complexities of their mother tongue. Accordingly, when the child first learned to speak, he or she did so through imitation. The child learned words, imitated sentence patterns, and later created original sentences according to the many patterns he had internalized. In essence, he or she has learned the patterns of verbal communication. Unfortunately, according to Watt-Taffe and Truscott (2000) when teaching writing, teachers fail to recognize this innate phenomenon.

2.11.4 Practice to Write by Imitation

Crowhurst (1983) conducted a study of sentence combining and sentence imitation as instructional strategies. The study found out that sentence imitation would increase the syntactic fluency of study which can result in better writing skills devoid of any detrimental effects. From the finding of Crowhurst (1983), it implies that imitation can be used as a pedagogy to help students improve upon their paragraph writing ability. Also, Lin (2017) proposed sentence imitation as a method when teaching English as a Second Language (EFL). According to the research finding, most students in the primary schools in China were not able to write a complete composition individually, even in the higher grade. To help the students out, some teachers used sentences from textbooks as models for students to imitate which greatly improved upon the students' writing skills. The finding therefore revealed that writing by imitation could be used to improve upon students' writing ability.

Usually, teachers are concerned with grammatical rhetoric, standard English and proper usage, that the student is no longer confident about his or her ability to use language (Pour-Mohammadi, Abidin, & Lai, 2012). Such a student will never be motivated to

write. According to Pour-Mohammadi, Abidin, and Lai (2012), students should be given the opportunity to learn to write by imitation and doing. Pour-Mohammadi, Abidin, and Lai (2012) added that learning to write, regardless of the role the teachers play is the mastery of several patterns of discourse. Teachers are therefore, encouraged to teach grammar items based on students' major grammar errors. In other words, if students have problem in verb choice in their writing, the teacher might present mini lesson on this grammar concept all in the efforts to help such a student to master his or her writing skills in order to write good paragraphs in compositions.

2.12 Summary of the Related Literature Review

From the related literature reviewed, it was revealed that writing is an important skill that students need for their academic advancement. They require writing skills for paragraphing in particular in their compositions. Nevertheless, it has been found that learning to master writing skills has been a thorn in the flesh of most students at all levels of the education system. Several research works in English as a Foreign Language writing, has revealed a variety of techniques for effective teaching of writing skills, whereby process oriented approaches to teaching writing skills have been discovered to be more successful than product oriented approaches. Also, researchers have established different errors that students make in paragraph writing in English as a Foreign Language. Not only this but also, these researchers have identified various sources of the mistakes including lack of motivation, mother tongue influence, negative attitudes towards English as a Foreign Language writing, inadequate teaching of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language among other factors.

Also, it has been established that students' learning strategies have an influence on their learning of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language. Researchers in English as a Foreign Language have made a number of considerations on the role of feedback on students' written essays, assessment practices in essay writing and availability and use of teaching and learning resources as means of improving students' writing skills. Regardless of these valuable efforts, students persistently encounter a lot of challenges in paragraph writing. Furthermore, from the reviewed literature, it is evident that no other similar study has been carried out in Savannah Region, even though students' performance in the Senior High School essay writing paper in the final examination has not been encouraging. This study therefore, investigates challenges students encounter in paragraph writing in the essays of Senior High Schools in Bole district in the Savannah Region of Ghana.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework that underpins this study include the cognitive process theory of writing which seeks to gain insight into the writing process through the writer's thought processes; socio-cultural theory of writing which postulates that students' ability to learn and write does not only occur through their own personal and individual cognitive activities, but that it is also influenced consciously and unconsciously by individuals' social and cultural context that surround them; and then the social cognitive theory and self-efficacy in writing which explain that people do not learn new behaviours just by trying them and either succeeding or failing, but rather, through the replication of the actions of others. These three theories were deemed appropriate for this study because they provide in-depth understanding of how skills in paragraph writing can be acquired and further developed for successful writing.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Igwenagu (2016) research methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods that are applied to a field of study. Rajasekar *et al.* (2013, p.5) described research methodology as “The procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena”. This means that research methodology is the process by which we make effort to determine how we can approach the work of investigating to understand a proposition. Generally, the aim of a study process and technique is to provide the way forward of a study in such a way that allows the researcher to achieve the purpose of the research.

3.2 Description of the Research Site

Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School are located in the Bole District of the Savannah Region of Ghana. The area falls within latitudes $9^{\circ} 2' 0''$ N, $2^{\circ} 29' 0''$ W (Population & Housing Census, 2010). Bole Senior High School is located about six hundred meters away from the town while St. Anthony Senior High School is about eight hundred meters away. Both Schools are mixed schools with the Bole Senior High School having a student population of five thousand (5000) and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School has a student population of one thousand and five hundred (1500). Bole Senior High School offers courses such as General Science, General Arts, Business, Agricultural Science, and Home Economics whereas St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School offers courses including General Arts, Business, Agricultural Science, and Home economics. There is a good number of teaching and non-teaching staff of about seventy (70) and

forty (40) respectively in Bole Senior High School. In St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School, there are (32) thirty-two teaching and twenty-seven (27) non-teaching staff respectively.

3.3 Research Approach

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research, according to Bhandari (2020) refers to the method of collecting and analyzing non-numerical data such as text, video, or audio to have better understanding of concepts, opinions, or experiences. This method of research approach as the author further explained can offer the researcher the opportunity to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences, history, and many others. Qualitative research is usually adopted to understand better how people experience the world.

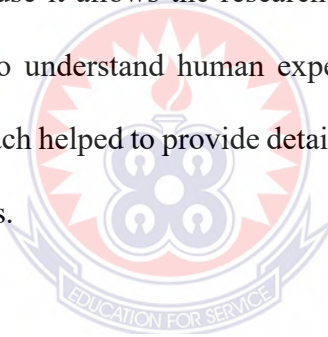
The methods for qualitative research such as participant-observation, surveys, interviews, focus groups, describing records and many others, are employed for data collection and mostly tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting the data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). As the researcher adopted this method, it offered the researcher the opportunity to seek clarity and probed for deeper understanding which enabled the researcher to obtain quality data for further analysis. Qualitative research involves an inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories.

The final year students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School were used as participants to obtain the relevant data regarding paragraphing in essay writing. The qualitative research approach employed in this study provided an opportunity for the researcher to ask the respondents questions that could not be put into numbers to ascertain the kind of difficulties students encounter in paragraph writing in their compositions. Qualitative research approach concerns human behaviours, which include interaction, thought, reasoning, composition, and norms, and these are usually studied holistically due to in-depth examination of phenomena involved (Lichtman, 2013). There was a close relationship between the researcher and the participants in this study which provided a fertile ground for the participants to freely share the problems they encounter in paragraph writing.

3.3.2 Justification for Using Qualitative Research Approach

Flick (2014) opined that “Qualitative research is interested in analyzing subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than number and statistics.” This explains that qualitative research is basically associated with multiple aspects. This means that its approaches are usually adopted to understand everyday human experience in all its complexity and natural settings. For this to be done, qualitative research adheres to perceptions that reality is socially constructed. Qualitative research more often than not is motivated in part by the recognition that teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language is a complex task (Mohan, 2012).

To uncover this complexity, we need not only to examine how learning takes place in general or what factors affect it, but also provide more in-depth examination and understanding of the individual learners and their behaviours and experiences. According to Mohan (2012) the nature of language assessment practices is complex hence, the researcher in this study found it necessary to employ the qualitative research methodology so as to unearth such complexities for better understanding. This research approach can help to contribute to the understanding of the complex features of language assessment. Qualitative research is well suited to the study of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the classroom, where conducting closely controlled experimental research is hardly possible. This research approach is very important in educational research because it allows the researcher to ask questions that cannot be easily put into numbers to understand human experience. Consequently, the use of qualitative research approach helped to provide detailed, comprehensive data and better interpretation of the results.



3.4 Research Design

Gray (2014) explained that a research design sets the procedure on the data that is needed, the methods to be employed in collecting and analyzing the data, and how all these will help in answering the research questions. Research design is therefore, the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to accomplish the research objectives. As a result, the research design usually provides a logical idea with respect to the procedure by which the research will be conducted. Consequently, a case study design was employed for this study. A case study research design is suitable for studies which need in-depth data regarding what we intend to investigate in a short time. The case study research design was therefore adopted in this study to assess

paragraph writing in the essays of Senior High School students in the Savannah region of Ghana.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

According to Abdul-wahab (2012) data collection procedure is the process by which the research instrument is administered for the purposes of data collection. Abdul-wahab (2012) further explained that data collection procedure in research refers to the approach used by the researcher to elicit responses from the respondents, participants, content, and observations. Data collection procedure can therefore, be seen as the procedure of collecting, measuring and analyzing accurate data for research using standard validated techniques. The researcher adopted structured interviews in collecting the primary data by administering the questionnaires in person to the target group (final year students and English language teachers) in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School. Secondary data were also obtained from secondary sources such as the final year students' exercise books, West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results from 2015 to date, and the chief examiners' reports for Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School over the years, and other relevant sources in respect of the project's aim of assessing paragraph writing in the essays of Senior High School Students in Savannah Region.

3.6 Data Sources

A variety of data and information were gathered from diverse sources in regard of the purpose of the research. The data that were required to conduct this study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. This involved collecting data from respondents

using a questionnaire and also obtaining data from secondary sources such as the final year students' exercise books, West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results from 2015 to date, and the chief examiners' reports for Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School over the years, and other relevant sources regarding the project's aim of assessing paragraph writing in the essay of Senior High School Students in Savannah Region.

3.6.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from secondary sources such as the final year students' exercise books, WASSCE results from 2015 to date, and the chief examiners' reports for Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School over the years, and other trusted databases for further processing and analysis. Secondary data refer to data that are not obtained by the researcher or it refers to any datum that has been previously gathered and is under consideration to be reused for new data collection for which the data gathered were not initially intended (Vartanian, 2010). Secondary data are therefore, data that are collected by someone else for his or her primary research purposes which are also used by a different person for the purpose of research. Generally, this type of data is classified as data that have been collected earlier by other researchers that could be archived and made available to the general research community. The current researcher made use of the final year students' exercise books and the chief examiners' reports for Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School over the years. Hence, after the secondary data were gathered from the various relevant sources mentioned above, the data was organized, scrutinized and coded for further processing, interpretation and discussion.

3.6.2 Primary Data

The primary data refer to data that are usually obtained from the field by the researcher in person for further processing and analysis. Hence, the primary data that were needed for the purpose of this study were obtained from the final year students and all the English language teachers in the Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School through the use of structured interviews. The questionnaires were administered and retrieved by the researcher in person.

3.7 Research population

Shukla (2020) explained that a research population refers to a group of units that possesses variable features under study and that the findings of the research can be generalized about these units. The target population refers to a group of individuals or participants with specific characteristics of interest and relevance to the research goal that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from. (Barnsbee, 2018). The target population is usually more refined as compared to the general population on the basis of containing no attribute that controverts a research assumption, context or goal. The target group of persons for this study was the final year students and all the English language teachers in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School in the Savannah Region of Ghana.

3.8 Sample Size Determination

According to Taherdoost (2016) a sample is a portion of a population which represents the rest of the population. Researchers in most cases, use samples for research studies but not the entire population because samples are real and cost effective as compared

to using the entire population. A sample size of any research population is therefore, the number of people who are captured in the survey to obtain the relevant data for analysis. The total population of the final year students of Bole Senior High School was eight hundred and fifty-three (853) and that of St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School was four hundred and ten (410). Hence, the total population of the final year students of the two schools was one thousand two hundred and sixty-three (1,263). Also, the population of the English language teachers in Bole Senior High School was twelve (12) while that of St. Anthony Senior High School was eight (8) totaling twenty (20).

Consequently, the grand total population from which the sample was taken was one thousand two hundred and eighty-three (1,283). A sample size of two hundred and eighty (280) was used for the data collection. The sample size was calculated as indicated below:

$$n = \frac{[N] (p) (1 - p)]}{[(N - 1) (B/C)^2 + (p) (1 - p)]}$$

Where n is the computed sample size needed for the desired level of precision; N is the population size; p is the proportion of population expected to choose; B is the acceptable amount of sampling error or precision; and then C is Z statistic associated with the confidence level which is 1.96 that corresponds to the 95% level (Dillman, 2000).

By substituting $N = 1283$, $p = 0.5$, $B = 0.05$, $C = 1.96$ into the formula;

$$n = \frac{[(1283) (0.5) (1 - 0.5)]}{[(1283 - 1) (0.05/1.96)^2 + (0.5) (1 - 0.5)]}$$

$$n = 320.75 / (1282)(0.0255)^2 + (0.25)$$

$$n = 320.75 / (1282)(0.0007) + (0.25)$$

$$n = 320.75 / 1.1474 = 279.5451$$

Therefore, the sample size (n) for the survey was two hundred and eighty (280).

3.9 Sampling Technique

Sampling as explained by Taherdoost (2016) is the process of selecting a quota of the population as a representative of the entire population. A purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents for the interview. Generally, purposive sampling helps the researcher to use his/her judgement to select people who are available and meet the research objectives or the target group for the research and are ready to voluntarily provide the needed information for the accomplishment of the purpose of the research (Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, the researcher believed that the target population (final year students of Bole Senior High School, St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School and the English language teachers of the two schools) were in a better position to produce the relevant and useful data that were needed to achieve the aim of the research. This is because as at the time the researcher collected the data, it was only the final year students who were present in the school due to the double track system. The English language teachers were also deemed suitable because they are the teachers who teach English language and might be able to provide relevant responses to content questions hence, the decision of the researcher to concentrate on this group of the population to obtain the data.

3.10 Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the researcher adopted different data gathering instruments such as document analysis, closed-ended questionnaire, structured interviews, and class observation to obtain quality and relevant data from the field for analysis and discussion. Researchers may employ different methods of administering structured interviews to participants such as through telephone calls, audio, internet, or self-administered. The structured interviews that were used for data collection in this study

were made up of closed-ended questions which were administered by the researcher in person. The researcher decided to use structured interview because it offers some level of privacy for the respondents to provide the requisite information in areas where sensitive questions are asked (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). It is also efficient with regard to time, limits researcher's subjectivity and bias, and the researcher controls the topics and format of the interview, making it easier to code, compare and analyse the data.

3.10.1 Document Analysis

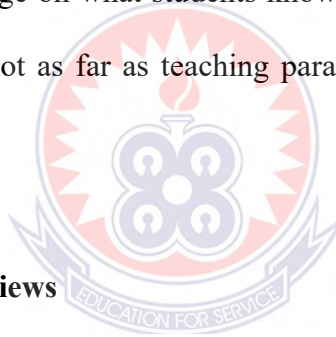
One of the data collections instruments that was used for the data collection was document analysis. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) document analysis refers to a systematic procedure by which both printed and electronic documents are reviewed or evaluated. Usually as Corbin and Strauss (2008) further stated, document analysis requires that the data should be examined and interpreted in order to bring forth meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge about the document concerned. By employing this instrument, twenty (20) students each in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School were made to write paragraphs based on some topics given by the researcher. To carry out this exercise, the researcher wrote down three topics for them to choose and write on. Each of the students chose a topic of their interest and wrote on them.

All students were given as much time as possible to finish up their work. In order to encourage the students to put in the best of their efforts to produce well written paragraphs, the researcher and a few of the teachers available made them aware that their paragraphs would be assessed. They were also given enough advice not to copy from one another, but to write the paragraphs on their own. After they were done with

the task, their scripts were taken and the paragraphs analyzed against some common and essential features of good paragraph such as organization, unity, paragraph development, and capitalization. Samples of students' exercise on paragraph writing can be found in appendix B.

3.10.2 Closed-Ended Questionnaire

Closed-ended questions refer to questions which participants are provided with options to choose a response from. In this study students were asked close-ended questions on their knowledge on paragraph writing. Teachers were also given close-ended questions on factors relating to paragraph writing. The responses from the respondents gave the researcher a fair knowledge on what students know about paragraph writing and also what teachers do or do not as far as teaching paragraph writing in the classroom is concerned.



3.10.3 Structured Interviews

A structured interview is a data collection method that is based on asking questions in a set order to collect data on a particular subject matter. In this study, participants (both students and teachers) were interviewed on the causes of students' problems in paragraph writing in English as a Second Language (ESL). Teachers were again interviewed on the strategies that they employ to help students overcome their difficulties in writing good paragraphs. The result from the interview gave the researcher an insight on the root causes of students' problems in paragraph writing and what could be done to avert the situation.

3.10.4 Class Observation

A classroom observation is a formal or informal observation of teaching while it takes place in a classroom or other learning environment. Under this instrument of data collection, the researcher conducted classroom observation by sitting in the classroom with the students while teaching and learning were going on. This helped the researcher to have a feel of what teachers do in the classroom by way of teaching as far as teaching of paragraph writing is concerned. The researcher observed both the teachers and the students during lesson delivery, taking notice of the teachers' method of teaching and the students' responses any time, the teachers asked a question. The researcher developed an observation checklist for the observation which can be found appendix C.

3.11 Constructing the Structured Interview

The interview involved close-ended questions. The questions were structured in such a way that the responses from the respondents would help the researcher to accomplish the research aim and objectives. In order to make this a reality, the questions were tailored towards achieving the purpose of the study. The questions consisted of four main parts which focused on respondent's perception on approaches in teaching writing in English as a Foreign Language in classrooms, importance of teaching writing skills, paragraph writing problems and difficulties, causes of students' problems in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) paragraph writing, and strategies for helping students in developing paragraphs, among other things. The researcher in this study personally conducted the interviews.

3.12 Data Treatment and Analysis

The main purpose of data analysis is to ascertain patterns within the data that point to theoretical understandings of the respondents' responses. The expectation is to put the data in a manageable form but ensuring that as much as possible the information is not distorted. The data obtained were prepared and organized. This was done by editing, sorting the data, and then, coding the data. This involves transcribing the interview results from the field. Afterwards, the data was reviewed by way of examining the data for patterns or repeated ideas that might have emerged.

A coding system was then developed to code the data. This means that codes were assigned to the data. The coding categories were formed by grouping together reasons that seemed similar from the research perspective. This involves going through each participant's responses and tagging them with codes in a spreadsheet. According to Onwuegbuzie (2010) crossover analysis would give the researcher an opportunity to go back and forth severally and present analysis of data obtained through different tools thematically. While the data were being analyzed, the researcher incorporated points that were generated through the given tools and the data induced interpretation to reach relevant conclusions. Such process of organizing and analyzing the data will help the researcher to develop and understand how each point is linked to the other. Besides, interpretation was also given after each analyzed item.

3.13 Validity and Reliability

3.13.1 Validity

Validity is very important to ensure successful research because an invalid research work is meaningless. Hence, validity is a necessity, a requirement of qualitative research. Validity is about whether what a researcher sets out to discover has been done

as expected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Even though it is impossible for a research to be perfectly valid, the validity of a research can be improved upon by ensuring a thorough sampling and assigning of proper statistical approach in collecting the data. Validity includes external validity, content validity, and construct validity. External validity refers to how far generalizations can be made to a population based on the sample used. Content validity is connected with fair representation of questionnaire contents on the subjects under study. Construct validity refers to the degree to which a measure for data collection suits the hypothetical framework in which it is established (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

Validity is considered attained if the target audience and the questions that were considered in the process are the correct ones. Also, the researcher must ensure that the target audience should be properly chosen and the audience should thoroughly represent the population. During the research, the measurement methods should also be consistent when analyzing the results of a qualitative method research involving dependability, credibility, and transferability. The dependability means that the result can be compared with prior studies on the same phenomena. The credibility means that the research is good enough and gives the correct picture of a phenomenon, while the transferability describes as to whether the results can be used or transferred to another or further research.

3.13.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the uniformity of the outcome of what a researcher sets out to obtain (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Data that can be evaluated, documented, and believed can be termed as reliable. Data sources must be credible and there should be

consistency in the study. This implies that if a previously conducted research is carried out on a similar sample and in a similar setting, then comparable findings should be produced. Reliability includes equivalence, internal consistency, and stability. Equivalence is achieved if a similar instrument is used and produced similar results. Internal consistency is reached provided the administered test can be divided into two halves, and stability is achieved when consistency is taken into consideration for a certain duration and similar portion of a population (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

The data validity and reliability testing technique that was employed in this study was therefore, an inter-rater reliability. The researcher employed this technique because the validity and reliability of this study are supported by the fact that all the sources from which data were obtained were relevant to the topic and also reliable. The research measures that were adopted were consistent and repeatable if used in a similar context for separate research. In addition, different trusted sources with different perspectives that are related to the topic were adopted to obtain credible data. The results of the study can also be generalized because the survey respondents that were used for the data collection were highly a true representation of the whole population. It is very important to improve upon the accuracy of a survey result because it is necessary in research. And this was one of the priorities of this particular study.

The conformance of the study results to generalizability is in no doubt. This is because the survey respondents were highly representative of the population from which data were collected. In other words, the sample that was used for the data collection was good enough to make some sort of reliable inference about the entire population. Consequently, there is a high degree of credibility of this study because there was no

kind of manipulation of the data at any point in time in the analysis of respondents' responses in this study. In other words, there was no sort of bias as the data collected were coded and analyzed as expected. Subsequently, the researcher is very confident that in the event that another study of this kind is conducted using the same tools and a similar sample size of students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony Senior High School as the researcher in this study did, same conclusion would be drawn.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval to conduct interview in the school was obtained from the members of the school's authority which include the Headmaster, The Assistant Headmaster, Senior House Master, and the Class Teachers. Consent forms were then issued to the respondents to read and understand with the assistance of the researcher before completing the questionnaire. Respondents were informed that they were not forced to participate in the study and could withdraw from the study even after signing the consent form. Respondents were also assured of confidentiality of their responses. They were made aware that their responses were entirely voluntary, confidential and were only for academic purposes. They were rest assured that the survey was designed to be anonymous such that their responses could not be connected with them as individuals.

3.15 Chapter Summary

This section provided the overall procedure and the various techniques that were adopted in accomplishing the research aims and objectives. The section also presented a description of the research design that was employed and offered an in-depth outline of the research population, sampling technique, the method of data analysis, data validity and reliability, and ethical considerations, among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data gathered through document analysis, open-ended questionnaire, interview and classroom observation from teachers and students. Paragraphs written by students were discussed thematically to answer the research questions that were raised in Chapter One. The analysis of the data from all instruments used in gathering the data has been carried out in an integrative manner with regard to the major themes and sub-themes of the study. The presentation was categorized into three main parts. The first part deals with students' paragraph writing problems which include problem of paragraph unity, problem of paragraph organization, problem of paragraph development, topic sentences problem, supporting sentences problem, concluding sentences problem and capitalization problem. The second part discusses causes of students' paragraph writing problems in English and the third part of the presentation focuses on teachers attempt to help students in overcoming their problems in paragraph writing.

4.2 Students' Paragraph Writing Problems

In this section, paragraphs written by a sample of the students were analyzed to identify the problems students encounter in paragraph writing. All kinds of paragraph writing problems are discussed and analyzed accordingly. Table 4.1 presents a summary of students' paragraph writing problems taken from paragraphs written by sampled students.

Table 4.1: Features of Students' Paragraph Writing Problems

Paragraph Writing Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Unity in the Paragraph	9	22.5
Poor Organization	7	17.5
Poor paragraph development	4	10.0
Topic Sentences	7	17.5
Supporting Sentences	5	12.5
Concluding Sentences	5	12.5
Capitalization Problem	3	7.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

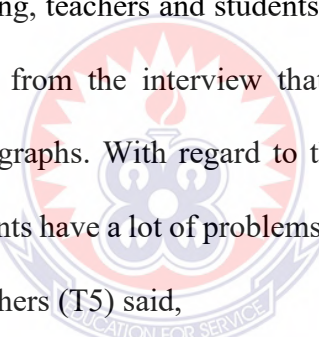
The results presented in Table 4.1 above indicate that the students have problem of paragraph development, using cohesive ties, organization, topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. It was realized that all the forty (40) paragraphs written by sampled students have disorganized sentences with lack of adequacy. This is an indication that students have serious difficulties in applying characteristics of good paragraph in their paragraph writing assignments. It is interesting to have a close look at the paragraph written by student twenty (S20) as given below.

Tramadol taking is not good. Tramadol has disadvantage on human kinds. So Many people love tramadol because increased his strong. But that is not for every times. After taking stop that person returned on his first persanality. Smok cigaret also acompany with taking tramadol. after finishing taking people go to gamble. Drinking tramadol alone no problem. But smok cigaret and gamble and taking all is big problem. Let I name importance of taking tramadol, in our village many farmars does dificult work. They take tramadol and got strong for work. more importance are others people take tramadol got brave. Yet again,

The efforts made by this student to compose a paragraph were not bad. However, the absence of important elements of paragraph writing that should have been included

negatively affected his efforts. As can be observed from the excerpt above, the misuse of features of good paragraph such as correct sentence structure, using correct cohesive ties for paragraph unity, topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences to ensure good flow of ideas among the sentences makes it difficult for one to understand the intended purpose of the text. For instance, the topic sentence and other supporting sentences are not clearly stated. Cohesive devices, which help a writer to ensure chronological order of supportive sentences and flow of ideas, are not correctly used.

In order to get further clarification about the students' difficulty in applying the various features of paragraph writing, teachers and students were asked to give their views on the issue. It was realized from the interview that students are faced with several challenges in writing paragraphs. With regard to this problem, all sampled teachers were of the view that students have a lot of problems in writing English paragraph. One of the twenty sampled teachers (T5) said,



Students encounter a lot of difficulties in producing grammatically correct sentences in their paragraphs. These difficulties include difficulty in writing chronologically coherent and unified paragraph. The teacher continued by saying that students have problems of writing structurally acceptable sentences.

Also, teacher seven (T7) expressed his views on students' paragraph writing difficulties.

I have always gotten the opportunity to mark a few students' exercise books. And for me, their written paragraphs indicate that students have several problems as far as paragraph writing is concerned. Most of the students cannot write meaningful sentences. More often than not, students include unnecessary ideas and rather omit important points in their texts.

On the part of the teachers, they gave detailed elaboration about the difficulties students face in paragraph writing as indicated above when they were extensively interviewed. Almost all the respondents interviewed mentioned lack of unity in students' paragraphs, poor organization, poor paragraph development, lack of topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and illogical arrangements of ideas as the main problems of the students. They did not appreciate coherence and paragraph development of students in their paragraph writing. In the same vein, the students were also given the opportunity to talk about their problems in writing good paragraphs. Majority of the students complained that writing has been the most difficult task in their academic work which cannot be accomplished. One of the students (S 22) said,

I actually face a lot of problems in English language. Beginning from grammar the one I always get good score in exam but when it come to writing I faced difficulty. Because in short writing a paragraph is difficult for me.

Also, another student (S 25) expressed her problem in writing paragraph as given below:

I face problems in getting good supportive sentences for my topic sentences, and connecting one sentence with the other because grammatical mistakes affect my expression in writing. In addition, I am often confused in where to put concluding sentences.

Deducing from this respondent, it is obvious that lack of good supporting sentences affect the unity of her paragraph. Also, lack of knowledge on where to use concluding sentences creates confusion in her attempts to write paragraphs. On the whole, one can say that the students are faced with serious problems in applying features of good

writing in their efforts to write paragraphs. This is because according to Boardman and Freedenberg (2008), effective paragraphs are usually expected to contain important characteristics such as topic sentence, unity, coherence, and adequate development.

4.2.1 Lack of Unity in the Paragraph

Generally, the unity of a paragraph is obtained from a controlling idea around which the paragraph is organized. Any paragraph that lacks unity means that the paragraph jumps from one idea to another idea, one topic to another topic, without a clear sense of purpose. Using correct cohesive ties to create a unified paragraph is another troubling issue found in the students' paragraphs. It seems that students have good ideas about the topic sentence. Clearly, they understood the topic and wrote a lot of sentences. However, when they composed their paragraphs, it was observed that almost all the participants whose scripts were analyzed repeatedly mixed up a lot of ideas in the paragraphs. This is because it was realized that most of the sentences in the paragraphs do not properly support the topic sentence. Instead of them to focus on writing about the advantages and disadvantages of tramadol, they wrote about other drugs. Take for example this paragraph written by student one (S1) as given below:

Tramadol has many advantage and disadvantage. from The advantage of tramadol, it is good for farming and digging. Another effect of tramadol is for self relax. It increase income of The country. most of sourthern part of our country recive big income from. if you take tramadol you can finish some work in short time. Tramadol and coffee are the same. People drink tramadol and coffee in the moring and afternoon. If you addicted to tramadol and coffee This means you become energized. But tramadol and alcohol are not the same. Again (additionally) another advantage of tramadol is for get strength beat arm rober. Disadvantage of tramadol is not good for preginant women. Addicted person do not work without tramadol.

It can be observed that the student intended to write about the advantages of tramadol during farming activities and other activities involving the physical strength. Another

advantage of tramadol is for self-relaxation. The following two sentences explain accordingly how tramadol benefits the country and the reason why people use tramadol. However, the fifth and sixth sentences suddenly changed their directions, beginning to show the relation between tramadol and coffee, and tramadol and alcohol which become a new idea or topic all together. These sentences have no correlation with the controlling idea indicated by the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph, and therefore, causing the paragraph to get disjointed. Again, student seven (S7) wrote the following paragraph as given below:

Taking tramadol is a source of happiness. It has speed up the activity of our body especially our nervous system. There are different drugs in the world that drugs can be grouped legal drugs and Illegal drug. Both drugs can controlled the activity of our body. They have contain different chemicals and affected our body. For example Domestic drugs in United States are from tobacco alcohols and tramadols, etc. Tramadol have contain chemicals and increase the activity of our body. It have not advantage, but It have many disadvantages. It affect economy. It has affected the use of our times and it has affected our money and so many. Tramadol is no good for our life.

Clearly, the writer of the above paragraph suddenly introduced unrelated ideas into the paragraph. This is to say that the writer used unrelated ideas. It can be observed that sentences three and four do not show a good relationship with the topic sentence. By and large, the paragraph encompasses three ideas, which were not connected together in respect of the topic sentence of the paragraph. The paragraph is therefore, disjointed and as such lacks unity. The disunity of the paragraph could however, be strengthened by either providing a topic sentence to envelop the three ideas within the paragraph or developing only one of the three ideas for the paragraph above, and leaving the other two for the next paragraphs.

Disunity refers to students' inability to focus on one main idea in a paragraph but rather writing sentences which are irrelevant to the topic sentence. Both teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaire and interview indicated that students have diverse problems in producing unified paragraphs. More often than not, students worry about how to produce many sentences in their paragraphs. With regard to this issue, one respondent (teacher nine) pointed out as follows:

Writing a unified paragraph is a difficult task for students. When they write a paragraph, majority of them mostly concentrate on quantity rather than quality.

This means that students are much concerned with writing many sentences than producing unified paragraphs.

Another teacher, (teacher thirteen) has a different view. Even though his students have difficulty in writing unified paragraphs, he gave priority to producing many sentences. He said,

Both areas (unity and paragraph development) are difficult for students. Nevertheless, I give attention to sentence level and I have always encouraged my students to produce as many sentences as they can because later, they will learn and sort out irrelevant ideas from their paragraphs.

As can be deduced from the statement of this teacher, he identified that his students have problems with unity and paragraph development however, he first of all gives attention to sentence level problems with the hope that students will learn how to write unified paragraphs as they progress. This implies that the teacher focused on one or two features of good paragraph writing. Unfortunately, the students would miss the opportunity to seek practice in writing unified paragraphs. As a result, the learners are most likely to give less attention to paragraph unity.

Also, students' response to the same question revealed that students have problem of producing a unified paragraph. For instance, one student (student 18) said as follows:

When I write a paragraph, I usually start writing many sentences about two or more different ideas at once instead of writing only about the topic sentence this is because I write every idea that I think of without self-edit. Besides, our teacher is more interested in grammar.

As a result, the students seemed to have much more difficulty in maintaining the unity of paragraphs in English writing. They might start the paragraph fairly well with a good topic sentence at the beginning as indicated above by student 18. However, the topic sentence seemed to lose control gradually as the writing progresses giving way to less related ideas to creeping. Finally, the student would divert from the controlling idea. It almost seemed that once the topic sentence was out of sight (beyond certain numbers of sentences), the controlling idea was out of the writer's mind too (the topic sentence was totally forgotten). Another common problem about paragraph unity in the students' English writing was that the ideas were, to some extent related however due to the lack of a controlling topic sentence, the ideas scattered around loosely, and eventually damaging the unity of the paragraph. However, according to Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) unity is very important in paragraphing because it helps the reader to closely follow along the writer's ideas as expressed in the paragraph.

4.2.2 Poor Organization

One of the serious problematic areas that was noticed in the students' paragraphs is organization. Writing coherently is the first organizational problem that students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School battle with in their paragraph writing. Students had difficulty in presenting materials in a logically organized and coherent manner. The result obtained from the written

paragraphs of students under study indicated that students' organization problems are in two forms namely; illogical organization of ideas or thoughts in the paragraph and misuse of cohesive ties. Consequently, students' written performance is far from being properly organized as observed in the excerpt written by student eleven (S11) as given below:

Tramadol in our country has advantage and disadvantage. The advantage of tramadol it increases social life between the societies. People need alcohol after they finished taking tramadol. This associated to unprotected sex. It is a means of giving and take different information. People used tramadol as income source generating by seling tramadol. When two people or three people take tramadol together they will easily exchange different information. If we see the disadvantage of tramadol effected our health economy and our time. People spend always many money to buy tramadol. They use that tramadol to encourage them friends when someone died.

Observing from the above paragraph, it can be realized that the flow of idea from one sentence to another sentence is not smooth and the sentences are not also interrelated. This means the ideas presented in the paragraph need to be rearranged in order to improve the organizational problem for the coherence of the paragraph. For instance, the third and fourth sentences are not followed by fifth sentence since the writer is explaining about the advantage. Sixth and seventh sentences are also placed in the wrong places. Apart from these, the ideas of the remaining sentences are not interconnected. The intensions of the students were to write around the topic but their writing responses were more of individual sentences on their own than interrelated to support the topic sentence. They were just listing points without using the appropriate cohesive ties to connect them to the topic sentence. As a result, there is no smooth relationship among the sentences in their paragraphs and the paragraphs are obviously disorganized.

When both teachers and students were asked about students' performance on organizing ability of students in their paragraph writing activities, the respondents explained that most of the students' paragraphs, more often than not lack cohesion and coherence. In respect of this question, one respondent (teacher 17) stated that "Students face problem in writing topic sentence. Developing supportive sentences from topic sentence is more problematic. In addition, they do not use cohesive ties." What this means is that students are not able to create a good topic sentence which will help them to derive supportive sentences from. Apart from that, the absence of cohesive ties makes their paragraphs disorganized.

Similarly, students' response to the interview indicated that students have difficulty in organizing their paragraphs. One student said,

Because I cannot write many sentences in my paragraph because of vocabulary problem I have, I am not worry about putting ideas according to their logical order. I am only worry about the vocabulary problem I have which prevented me to write many sentences in my paragraph.

Obviously, this student's difficulties stem from lack of sufficient knowledge of coherence and cohesion which mainly emerges from lack of vocabulary and sufficient practice on these features of effective paragraph writing. The results also revealed that the students with poor organization ability could not effectively put their ideas into paragraphs. One of the respondents' comments evidenced his inability in organizing his writing into paragraph:

I have some ideas when I write. I cannot write them in paragraph. I write the first sentence and I think a lot it is very difficult to add....

Apparently, the relative lack of attention to the overall organization of paragraph writing may result from their lack of second language proficiency in general and L2

writing proficiency in particular. Maybe, the students with low writing ability only concentrate on word-level and sentence-level problems, and fail to consider the issue of paragraph organization.

Generally, the result obtained from the interview and the questionnaire indicated that learners produced as many sentences as they could however; their problem is how to identify the relevant sentences and arrange them logically using different cohesive ties in their paragraphs. This, as a result creates incoherent paragraphs. Their ideas do not smoothly move from one sentence to the other and for that matter, there is no logical transition among the sentences which are disjointed. This confirms the finding by Ahmed (2010) in a study to investigate the organizational problems of Egyptian students using a mixed-method research design. In that research, two tools were utilized to collect the data; questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The results of the study revealed that students had problems in their English writing. It was noticed that they had difficulties in writing coherent introductions, thesis statements, topic sentences, concluding sentences and conclusions. Cohesion in paragraphing was a serious problem to these Egyptian students because they have difficulties in using reference, substitution, ellipsis and cohesive ties.

4.2.3 Poor Paragraph Development

For any successful and effective paragraph, proper paragraph development is needed. The paragraph should go beyond just organizing and unifying it. It should be fully developed devoid of cracks, inconsistencies, and irrelevant supportive sentences such that the message to be conveyed to the reader can be clear. However, constructing well developed paragraphs has been one of the difficulties EFL learners encounter. To be

able to detect such difficulties, students were given a topic on “The advantage and disadvantage of tramadol”, and were asked to produce a well-developed paragraph as much as possible. After they had finished with the assignment, their paragraphs were analyzed based on components of a well-developed paragraph such as the appropriateness, accurateness, clear language, and specific purpose. Besides, the paragraph analysis was made based on the background information given for the students and the type of genre to be followed by the students to adequately develop their paragraph. Accordingly, they were given supportive information about economic, social and personal advantage and disadvantage of tramadol. To this effect, the students were expected to develop their paragraph adequately without difficulties.

However, the result obtained from students’ paragraph analysis indicated that most of the students (40) were not able to obtain the expected adequacy which is an important element of any well-developed paragraph. There were no explanations and examples in the paragraphs to support the points that students raised in their paragraphs. For instance, the paragraph written by student (S 14) is as shown below:

Tramadol is comman in Ghana. All people take tramadol. Tramadol give power. Tramadol have littile advantage but many many disadvantage. Tramadol selers get money. when fathers take tramadol children look and practice taking drug. This is advantage. It make as strong. When tramadol is expensive people spend money. This is also disadvantage. Other advantage when people take tramadol become happy. when someone hungry or fight with other person when he take tramadol he can forget that problem.

From the above extract, it can be observed that the student tried to construct the paragraph with simple sentences. Also, the student made efforts to develop the paragraph based on the background information given him. To some extent, the flow of the ideas in his paragraph is also fairly good. Nevertheless, the paragraph does not

adequately explain the writers' purpose because the content of the language is inappropriate. The student also failed to strongly connect the sentences and arrange them logically. Again, the paragraph was not started with effective topic sentence and expanded with relevant supportive sentences. Furthermore, the paragraph was not developed with the appropriate elements of adequacy. Take for instance, the student said,

tramadol give power.

Then, he suddenly moved to another point without giving further explanation as to how the tramadol gives that power. In addition, in sentence two (2) the respondent said,

Tramadol selers get money.

Upon reading this sentence, readers would probably expect to read about how tramadol sellers get money. Unfortunately, nothing like this could be found thereafter. Therefore, the respondent failed to provide sufficient supporting details for the topic sentence in this paragraph.

In relation to students' ability to provide supporting details for the topic sentence in this paragraph, the views of the teachers were solicited and one respondent said,

Students' paragraphs are mostly not clear. They lack sufficient supporting ideas. They cannot give enough explanation to the topic.

It is observed that in many cases, important ideas are missing from students' paragraphs. In some cases too, students provide irrelevant information which does not support the topic. In general, the results of sampled paragraphs written by sampled students indicated that lack of details and examples in developing paragraphs were common problems among students. This difficulty of developing paragraphs is associated with students' lack of adequate vocabulary according to the responses of teachers and students in the interviews. According to the assertion of Boardman and

Freedenberg (2008) a paragraph should be properly developed so that the idea that is intended to be presented to the reader can be well expressed. The authors further explained that a paragraph is adequately developed when it describes, explains and supports the topic sentence. If the main aim of the topic sentence is not fulfilled or if the reader is left with questions after reading the paragraph, then that paragraph is not adequately developed.

4.2.4 Topic Sentences

Paragraph is the basic unit of academic writing in English. Students need to learn how to write a paragraph because all other types of academic writing such as essays, reports, compositions, and research papers are based on paragraph. Academic paragraphs have a very specific organizational pattern and students must follow this pattern, to produce good paragraphs for their readers to understand. This simple pattern is based on topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008).

However, analysis of students' sampled paragraphs showed that students had problems with topic sentences in their essays. This analysis of students' challenge in using the correct topic sentences in this study was made based on the frame work of Boardman and Frydenberg (2008) which states that effectively organized and developed paragraph or any text must have a topic sentence that contains a controlling idea of the paragraph. Accordingly, respondents were made to write a paragraph on the topic "The advantages and disadvantages of tramadol." The paragraphs produced by the students were collected and critically analyzed, paragraph by paragraph in order to detect the challenges students might have as far as topic sentence in a paragraph is concerned.

Take for example the sample paragraph written by student twenty-seven (S27) as given below:

Tramadol sold in many place. Smoking have many negative effects. People which take alcohol do not eat food, they eat in the morning. after that no food becouse of no time. People also smoke cigara and wee. Tramadol is good. Cigara smoking is bad habit. It affect our economy and our body..... A students take alcohol to improve his mental performance during exam. Another negative side of tramadol is it was destiroyed our baget. The positive side is...

It can be observed from the above extract that, the paragraph written by this student was poorly developed due to the lack of a topic sentence. Consequently, the result of this paragraph analysis indicated that the paragraph constructed was full of fragments and therefore, could not be understood based on a particular idea. Hence, this poor organization revealed that students have great difficulties in English proficiency to write effective paragraphs which in turn can affect the reader's understanding of the message. Understanding their written paragraphs becomes very difficult as the sentences in the paragraphs do not contain the relevant topic sentences.

Both the teachers' and students' responses to the interview questions indicated that students are not able to write paragraphs with one topic sentence. They are unable to express their ideas in the context they are required to write. For instance, a number of students reported that they have difficulty in getting suitable topic sentence to express their ideas appropriately. Student twenty-nine (S29) wrote:

I don't know how to write sentences using a good topic sentence in paragraph although I know there is supposed to be something like that but I find it difficult to do so when our teacher gives us writing tasks.

Another student, (S32) revealed his weakness in the use of topic sentence by saying:

One of the difficulties I have in writing paragraph is getting good topic sentence to write my paragraph on. It is the most difficult activity for me. Most of the times I try to write a good paragraph but don't know what to say as a topic sentence to write on.

These difficulties expressed by these students are supported by Boardman and Freedenberg (2008) who stated that students might start their paragraphs fairly well with a good topic sentence at the beginning but as they progress, the topic sentence seem to lose control and gradually give way to less related ideas to creep in. Finally, the student would divert from the controlling idea and begin to write anything.

In the same way, three of the teachers attested that students really have serious problems with topic sentence in paragraph writing. For instance, two of the teachers (T1 & T3) stated,

A common deficiency in the students writing is getting a relevant topic sentence for their paragraphs. They always write paragraphs that do not contain related ideas.

Also, teacher two (T2) stated as follows:

Using a good topic sentence is one of the major problematic areas of most of my students. Although they are taught how to generate a good topic sentence and how to develop it, they do not make good use of that knowledge when they are writing.

It looks as if students are made to memories what they study rather than engage in critical and creative thinking processes, a practice that is probably hindering them from writing English paragraphs appropriately. From the above, one can realize that students learn how to generate topic sentences but do not make effective use of that knowledge during paragraph writing. This challenge seems to emanate from the way paragraph

writing is taught, it is taught without bringing out certain characteristics that can help students to be able to develop their paragraphs appropriately. A good topic sentence must have the following three characteristics. Using one of these three features will enable a writer to develop his or her paragraph appropriately. Otherwise, if it is a fact, you as a writer cannot write more on that fact (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008).

- (i) Use a descriptive adjective before a noun.
- (ii) Use several and many.
- (iii) Use numbers.

When the topic sentence is a fact, it will be very difficult to write a paragraph on it. However, if the topic sentence has a descriptive adjective within it, it will enable the writer to develop his or her paragraph easily and correctly. A good topic sentence should therefore contain any one of the above characteristics.

4.2.5 Supporting Sentences

The sentences that build up the body of a paragraph are called the supporting sentences. Supporting sentences are sentences that are used to buttress the topic sentence of a paragraph. They are used to provide logics and evidences through which the writer can convince his or her readers or at least convey his or her message to the audience. There are two types of supporting sentences; these are major and minor supporting sentences. Major supporting sentences directly support the topic sentence in a paragraph while minor supporting sentences directly support the major supporting sentences and indirectly support the topic sentence (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008).

In paragraph development, supporting sentences are very important. Without them the writing looks disorganized and meaningless. The absence of supporting sentences in a paragraph makes the paragraph meaningless and can cause confusion in the reader in

understanding a text and that may lead to wrong interpretation. This is in consonance with Boardman and Frydenberg (2008) who opined that irrelevant supporting sentences in a paragraph can render the paragraph either meaningless or rather meaning something else the writer did not intend to put across. More importantly, using relevant supporting sentences helps the writer to present his or her ideas clearly and accurately by showing where one thought ends and another begins. It also shows good relationships between the ideas within the topic. In the essays of the sampled students, students tried to state their ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of tramadol. However, because of the absence of the relevant supporting sentences, their writings seem to portray that these students do not understand how to appropriately buttress their topic sentences with good supporting sentences in conveying information accurately and effectively to their readers.

To get a better picture of students' problem in the use of good supporting sentences to produce acceptable paragraphs, a paragraph written by one of the sampled students (S21) was analyzed. The paragraph is as follows:

The advantages of tramadol are many. Alcohol drinking can create plenty talk between group members. When people smoke, they can misbehave in public. People must stop alcohol drink. Cigara taking is not a good thing. But some people say if you want to do hard work take medisin. For carrying loads in markets people take alcohol, cigara and medisin. Also carrying wood in bush. The relationship of friend is good after taking medisin.

From the above paragraph, it can be observed that the writer tried to produce many sentences based on the background information given on the topic he was asked to write on. He however, failed to use relevant supporting sentences to link up with the topic sentence, "The advantages of tramadol are many." Interestingly, the student never said anything about the topic sentence. For example, the first sentence is talking about the

effect of drinking alcohol. The second sentence is about what people can do when they smoke. The next sentence is a warning to people to stop drinking alcohol. The fourth sentence introduced a different idea altogether, it brought in the idea of smoking of cigarette. Immediately, the idea of smoking of cigarette is linked with the effect of medicine. Subsequently, alcohol, cigarette and medicine (unspecified) were shown to have the power of helping people to carry loads in the market.

In line with this, almost all the teachers who were captured in the survey attested that their students have problems with the use of supporting sentences in producing clear and meaningful paragraphs. For instance, (T19) said,

Using relevant supporting sentences is one of the problems my students face when writing paragraphs. They cannot appropriately use supporting sentences as expected to express their ideas in paragraphs. This is because they consider supporting sentences to be of little importance to affect their writing. They just construct any sentence that comes into their minds.

Some students, according to the document analysis used sentences that are not related to what they started talking about in the paragraph. When students were asked whether they underestimate the importance of using sentences that contain similar idea as the topic sentence to build up one unique point in a paragraph in their essay writing, one of them said:

I do not worry about supporting sentences when I write. I always want to write plenty to get a paragraph.

During the researcher's observation, it was realized that T2 and T3 took separate sentences from students' work and presented on the blackboard. Then both teachers had given some comments about arrangement of ideas in a paragraph. After that they told the rest of the students to give self-correction by themselves.

Again, teacher one (T1) took two students' exercises and wrote them on the blackboard. Then he encouraged the class to comment on them. A few students raised their hands and commented on it. In their comments they never said anything about supporting sentences of a topic sentence. The teacher spent most of his time talking about indentation problem, spelling mistake and correcting grammatical errors with the class. In general, the above problems may be said to arise as a result of low attention given to the practice of using relevant supporting sentences to build up one main idea in a paragraph from both teachers and students. Also, lack of basic knowledge on the correct use of supporting sentences in a paragraph in relation to a topic sentence by the students can result in the haphazard use of sentences in their paragraphs which have no relationship with the topic sentence.

4.2.6 Concluding Sentences

The concluding sentence of a paragraph is generally needed in a stand-alone paragraph. Usually a concluding sentence is the restatement of the topic sentence which is named as the restatement concluding sentence. That is, it gives the same information as the topic sentence, but the information is expressed in a different form. Besides the restatement concluding sentence, there is another type of concluding sentence known as the summary concluding sentence. Such type of concluding sentence summarizes all major supporting sentences and presents it as a concluding sentence. Concluding sentence usually starts with a transition such as in short, all in all, in conclusion, in summary, etc. Not all concluding sentences actually require a transition. As the writer, it is you who decide whether or not a transition is needed (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008).

The use of concluding sentence in paragraphs is yet another challenge of the students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School. According to the document analysis result, many students are not able to use the appropriate concluding sentences in their paragraphs. Some of them use such expressions in the middle of their paragraphs as though they were concluding their write up. It is important to have a look at another student's paragraph to ascertain the level of error in the way students use concluding sentences. Below is a typical paragraph written by student eight (S8).

Tramadol has advantage and disadvantage. Tramadol is also find in Bole. Therefore, it is important to know that you get it here. All in all that is what I can say. For hard work get tramadol. The people that take tramadol is complete jop fast or complete short period of time. In conclusion, tramadol is important to study longer time. But disadvantage of tramadol is more. The very common effect of tramadol is dead your cells. Another effect reduce your economy. In summary, you can see each effects of tramadol that adapt every time is not work without tramadol. Also, tramadol is find in other place like Sawla, Tuna and Wa. It is use to help people do work fast. Disadvantage for tramadol is very many.

As can be observed from the above paragraph, the student made good effort in producing her paragraph. She had good understanding of the topic and wrote sentences relating to the topic in her paragraph. Nevertheless, she has problem with the use of concluding sentence. For instance, in the first sentence, she introduced the reader to the fact that tramadol has both advantages and disadvantages. In the next two sentences, she talked about where tramadol can be found. Then, in the third sentence she wrote as though she was drawing conclusion to the write up by saying “*All in all that is what I can say.*” Surprisingly, in the fifth sentence she started talking about what tramadol can help us do, “*For hard work get tramadol.*” Then again, in the seventh sentence, she

seemed to have drawn conclusion to the write up. She said, *“In conclusion, tramadol is important to study longer time.”* However, the next sentence suggests that she was going to talk about the disadvantages of tramadol. She said, *“But disadvantage of tramadol is more.”* This continued in the next two sentences but the eleventh sentence again seems to be a conclusion to the write up. She stated, *“In summary, you can see each effects of tramadol that adapt every time is not work without tramadol.”* This actually suggests a conclusion but she didn’t conclude here. She went further to tell the readers about alternative places that tramadol can be found. *“Also, tramadol is find in other place like Sawla, Tuna and Wa.”* Then again, she brought in the disadvantages tramadol, *“Disadvantage for tramadol is very many.”*

Observing from the above paragraph it is obvious that the student has a serious problem with where to introduce a concluding sentence. She doesn’t use it at the right place and this makes the write up disjointed and the idea meaningless. A sample of the teachers was also asked in the interview about students’ use of concluding sentences in paragraph writing. Regarding this issue, all the respondents claimed that concluding sentences are not appropriately used. According to them:

Most of the students use concluding sentences anywhere they want to use. They have bad habit. For example, they use concluding sentences at the beginning of paragraphs and in the middle of paragraphs where they are not needed. On the contrary, where they are expected to use concluding sentences such as at the end of a paragraph, they forget and use topic sentences or supporting sentences. This is the most difficult challenge they face in essay writing.

All of the teachers attested that the students have serious problems in using appropriate concluding sentences at the right place which is basically due to their bad habits. In line with this claim by the teachers, one student pointed out saying,

I have the habit of writing concluding sentences at the beginning of paragraphs. When I start writing, I am not aware of doing that. Sometimes I want to make the English look nice.

According to Hilemariam (2011), students sometimes become careless and commit errors when they tend to write through English language due to their limited knowledge of the language. It can be inferred from the analysis that students lack the knowledge of proper use of concluding sentences in paragraph writing. Failure to use the correct rules for proper paragraph writing may partly be due to bad habit and some students' anxiety to probably show that they can write good English. However, if one has a sound knowledge about good characteristics of paragraph writing, it helps one to be effective in his or her written communication.

4.2.7 Capitalization Problem

Capitalization is yet another challenge of the students of Bole and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical Schools. According to the document analysis result, many students use capital letters instead of small letters and vice versa. The use of small letters at the beginning of a new paragraph and capital letters in the middle of sentences are typical examples noticed in the paragraphs written by sampled students.

Table 4.2: Observed Capitalization Problems in Students' Paragraph

Capitalization problem	Frequency	Percentage
Using small letter instead of capital letter	14	35.0
Using capital letter instead of small letter	15	37.5
Using capital letters within words	11	27.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

As can be observed from Table 4.5 above, using small letter instead of capital letter was found in most of the students' paragraphs. Using capital letter instead of small letter takes the second rank while using capital letters within words occupies the last rank. This result is an indication that students really have problem using capitalization. It is important to have a look at another student's paragraph to ascertain the level of errors. Below is a typical paragraph written by student eight (S8).

tramadol is the one live in Bole. therefore It is important For reactive your body. The people that take tramadol is complete Jop quicley or complete short period of time. tramadol is important to be study longer time. Disadvantage of tramadol is many. The most eFfects of tramadol is dead your cell. reduce your economy. You can see each effects of tramadol that adapt every time is not work without tramadol. IT is time killer. therefor all people stop drinking tramadol.

As can be observed from the above paragraph, the student made good effort in producing her paragraph. She had good understanding of the topic and wrote sentences relating to the topic in her paragraph. Nevertheless, she has problem with capitalization. For instance, in the first sentence, the first letter of the word "tramadol" should be capital since it is noun. After full stop, the first letter of the second sentence should also be a capital and followed by comma. Besides, using capital letters without any reason is not important however, capital letters are used in the second sentence "For", third sentence "Jop", sixth sentence "eFfects" and ninth sentence "IT." The first letter or the second letter or all the letters within the word of the above words is inappropriately capitalized in the text. As the researcher observed, similar problems were repeated. Another problem that was observed is the fragmentation of sentences and the use of inconsistent words.

A sample of the teachers was also asked in the interview about the capitalization problems of students in paragraph writing. Regarding this issue, all the respondents claimed that capitalization is not appropriately used. According to them:

Most of the students use capital letters anywhere they want to use. They have bad habit. For example, they use capital letters in the middle of sentences where they are not needed, within words, and even at the end of some words. On the contrary, where they are expected to use capital letters such as at the beginning of a sentence, they forget and use small letters. This is the most difficult challenge they face in essay writing.

All of the teachers attested that the students have serious problems in using appropriate word capitalizations at their right places which is basically due to their bad habits. In line with this claim by the teachers, one student pointed out saying,

I have the habit of writing capital letters. When I start writing, I am not aware of doing that. Sometimes my handwriting has its own problem.

According to Hilemariam (2011), students sometimes become careless and commit errors when they tend to write through English language due to their limited knowledge of the language. It can be inferred from the analysis that students lack the knowledge of proper use of capital letters in paragraph writing. Failure to use the correct rules for proper paragraph writing may partly be due to bad habit and handwriting of students. However, if one has a sound knowledge about word capitalization, spelling and punctuation in writing activities, it helps one to be effective in his or her written communication.

4.3 Summary of Research Question One

The first research question of the study was to find out the major problems students in Senior High Schools encounter in paragraph writing. Generally, it was discovered from the document analysis of paragraphs written by students, the use of questionnaire for

English language teachers and students, interviews, and classroom observation that were employed in the data collection and analysis that students have problem with paragraph development, organization, topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and capitalization. Furthermore, it was specifically found that lack of cohesion in paragraphing was the major problem to the students in Bole and St. Anthony Senior High Schools. This confirms the finding by Ahmed (2010) in a study to investigate the organizational problems of Egyptian students. The finding in that study states that students had difficulties in writing coherent introductions, thesis statements, topic sentences, concluding sentences and conclusions. This is an indication that students have serious difficulties in applying characteristics of good paragraph in their paragraph writing assignments.

4.4 Causes of Students' Problems in ESL Paragraph Writing

The main aim of this study was to assess the problems of students ESL paragraph writing. The students' writing difficulties, however, could be associated with some factors and this study therefore, intended to obtain data on the causes that could affect the achievement of students' effective paragraph writing. Therefore, the major factors which trigger the difficulties of effective paragraph writing were observed from two different perspectives; the students' and the teachers' related factors. To this effect, twenty (20) English language teachers were interviewed to reflect on their experiences regarding the problems that students encounter during paragraph writing.

The various causes of students' difficulty in paragraph writing are given in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Views of teachers on causes of students' problems in ESL paragraph writing

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of knowledge on strategic use of target language	2	10.0
Students' writing apprehension	4	20.0
Lack of vocabulary	3	15.0
Lack of regular practice	6	30.0
Teachers' ways of giving feedback	5	25.0
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Accordingly, some of the responses of some of the teachers are as follows:

The challenging issue for students is how to begin writing, the recommended strategies to follow, organizing ideas and expressing their ideas using an appropriate language (T1 & T5).

Also, (T4 & T6) added by saying,

Writing anxiety with generating and organizing ideas, lack of vocabulary, lack of practice and teachers' way of giving feedback are some of the major sources of students' writing difficulties.

Similarly, the students were also interviewed and the causes of their problems in paragraphs writing were given as indicated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Views of students on causes of students' problems in ESL paragraph writing

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of knowledge on strategic use	6	15.0
Students' writing apprehension	8	20.0
Lack of vocabulary	6	15.0
Lack of regular practice	9	22.5
Teachers' ways of giving feedback	11	27.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

4.4.1 Lack of Knowledge on Strategic Use

Strategic use can be viewed as one of the most challenging problems EFL learners find difficult to overcome in paragraph writing due to lack of knowledge. This is due to the fact that effective paragraph writing demands knowledge of different stages of development of a paragraph. These stages of paragraph development include thinking, brainstorming, plan drafting, checking, rewriting, and proofreading. However, from the researcher's observation and analysis, it was noticed that students could not effectively use these strategies of writing as they compose their paragraphs due to lack of knowledge. Regarding this issue, the teachers were asked about the causes of students' difficulties in writing paragraph. According to teacher three (T3),

Students' do not use the necessary steps in writing effective paragraph. For example, they do not think, brainstorm, plan drafting, check, rewrite, and proofread effectively. As a result, they put in a lot of ideas, some of which are not necessary. They are unable to choose relevant ideas to produce effective paragraphs. Again, they do not proofread and revise their work. As a result, their paragraphs are mostly full of grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors which make their paragraphs very boring and ineffective.

According to (T3) as stated above, though writing down every idea students think of is not bad, they are supposed to always identify the most important points to deal with, especially during the brainstorming stage. However, as the teachers explained, students lack the knowledge on how to use the strategies in paragraph writing. In addition, teacher five (T5) pointed out as follows:

The biggest challenge of students is how to begin writing, and some students could spend a whole lesson period thinking of what and how to write.

Similarly, student nine (S9) said,

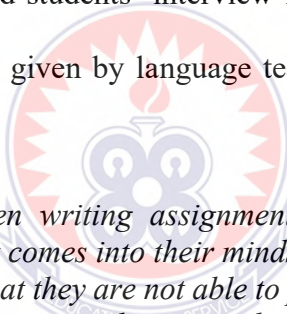
I want to write inside or outside classroom when a writing activity is given. However, no sooner than start writing, I begun to worry about my problems of how to begin what to do next, and how to come up with the end product of a given paragraph. Therefore, I give up writing and look for my teacher's help.

When the researcher was observing the teachers during their lessons delivery, it was noticed that some of the teachers were seen walking around without helping the students with their writing process. They wrote all the stages guiding good paragraph writing on the blackboard and left the students to write but learners did not give attention. Teachers should have been playing a valuable role in raising awareness of the process of composing paragraph by explaining the stages of writing to the students instead of leaving students without any support. This is important because according to Maarof *et*

al. (2011) teachers' efforts can be fruitful if only they involve their students in the process by structuring activities that take account of these stages. Anything short of this can affect students' performance on producing effective paragraphs. It is therefore, important that teachers provide them guidelines on the strategies of producing effective paragraphs regarding what the students should do during thinking, brainstorming, planning, drafting, checking, rewriting and proofread stages.

4.4.2 Students' Writing Apprehension

Apprehension in writing can be described as the fear or anxiety of the writing process. Writing anxiety can therefore, affect students' writing performance negatively. The data from both teachers' and students' interview indicated that students feel anxious when writing assignment is given by language teachers. One of the teachers said as given below:



Usually, when writing assignment is given to students, they write anything that comes into their minds. It is always obvious that they are so nervous that they are not able to put their ideas in order as expected. When such tension takes control of them, they do not write anything meaningful.

Again, another teacher claimed as follows:

Apprehension in my students is a common thing. When students are asked to do paragraph writing, it is always shocking to realize that some of them don't even know how to start. Some keep repeating the same point over and over again.

One of the students, twenty-eight (28) also explained the causes of her anxiety during paragraph writing as follows:

I always think and gather information in Dagaare and then, translate it into English which I really think is wrong. So, this problem increases my apprehension of writing because once you translate from Dagaare into English, you will get a lot of mistakes, misunderstanding the ideas, and ending up with wrong grammar. Time is also a factor that increases my apprehension.

This is an indication that this student is worried about the strategy she applies when she starts brainstorming and planning. Thinking and gathering information in her native language and try to translate that information into English leads to a lot of errors. Also, she gets very tensed when she writes under time pressure. It can therefore, be deduced that lack of knowledge of paragraph organization; generating ideas; lack of vocabulary and the correct language are some of the reasons that contribute to students' writing apprehension.

Again, the teachers' responses in the interview revealed that students feel anxious when writing assignments are given to them. They attested that it is due to lack of vocabulary which results in problem of generating ideas in writing the paragraphs. Similarly, data from class observation indicated that the time English language teachers provide for students to write a paragraph is usually very limited. According to Vanhille, Gregory and Corser (2017) assertion, writing apprehension is an overwhelming sense of anxiety associated with a feeling of dread when facing a writing activity. The authors explained that when students are given a writing activity they begin worrying about writing a paragraph as psychological rather than assuming it as logistical. Consequently, they may feel worry when they have to write under time constraints. This means the sources of anxiety have been detected from an individual's writing ability, the degree of preparation to complete the writing, the fear of being assessed and judged of writing tasks. In general, writing anxiety negatively affects writing performance of students.

4.4.3 Lack of Vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary is yet another problem that was observed in the students' paragraphs that were analyzed. According to both teachers and students who were interviewed, students found themselves using a limited number of words over and over again. One reason for the limited variety of words could be a difference between English and students' mother tongue language. This is because as one responded attested, students brainstorm in their mother tongue language whenever they want to write a paragraph in English. For instance student two (S2) wrote:

In most cases when writing assignment is given, I usually think about it in my local language. This helps me to generate many ideas, but the problem I then face is when I try to change those ideas to English because I do not know the exact words to do the changing, so I stop writing.

In the same vein, teacher thirteen (T13) confirmed that one of the factors for students' weakness in paragraph writing is lack of vocabulary.

Students have serious problem regarding vocabulary. Their choice of words is not good. You always see repetition of the same words in their paragraphs. Besides, when they are undertaking any writing tasks, they do not think in the target language which cause loss of coherence when they try to translate the information from the local language to English.

Similarly, teacher nineteen (19) claimed as follows:

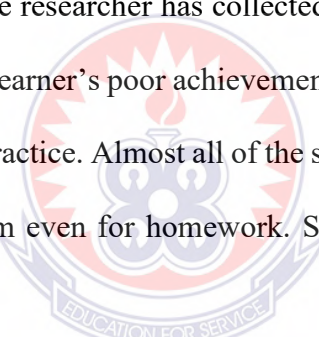
The vocabulary level of students is very low. In almost all the scripts of students one would realize that students keep using almost the same words to express different ideas which do not help. They end up messing up what they intend to say.

This result indicates that students lack enough vocabulary to put their ideas into effective paragraph writing. Also, they frequently brainstorm in their mother tongue during writing activities. In relation to this as literature has indicated, lack of vocabulary

is a common source of writing difficulty among EFL students (Haider, 2012). Again, both teachers and students attested that lack of vocabulary which emerges from students not using the target language for thinking could affect their performance in writing paragraph. This is confirmed by Rabab'ah (2003) who explained that students are unable to give voice to their thoughts because of lack of adequate stock of vocabulary.

4.4.4 Lack of Regular Practice

The ability to write well is not a skill that can be acquired naturally; it must be learned through practice and experience. This means that, taking time to go through a writing process is absolutely an essential part of writing. As learners have claimed through the questionnaires and what the researcher has collected as evidence from the observation phases, he may assert that learner's poor achievement in writing is attributed to the lack of sufficient training and practice. Almost all of the students mentioned that they do not write outside the classroom even for homework. Student twelve (S12) said as given below:



I think my inability to write well is because I don't practice it after classroom. I find it difficult to write so, I don't do it. Even most of the times in the classroom I try to avoid writing.

From the above data it is clear that the student does not practice writing because he finds it difficult to write. As a result, he stops writing. Furthermore, the teachers who were interviewed confirmed that the process of learning a foreign language requires a continuous practice. However, according to the teachers, they do not give students much time to practice. Teacher six (T6) stated as follows:

I should have been giving them more practice of writing in the class but most of the students do not practice paragraph writing whether in class or at home. What most of them mostly do is to copy the work of the best learners or they rely on their relatives to write their homework for them.

As can be deduced from the teacher's statement, he does not train students to practice writing in the classroom because of fear of students copying from one another. Also, teacher (T9) said,

Students take long time to write any writing activity. So, it is difficult to cover one writing assignment during the period scheduled for a lesson. Therefore, I am sometime forced to shorten the time that allows for teaching writing and let students to finish the rest of the task as homework.

Similar to the previous teacher's reflection, this teacher does not give the students enough time to practice writing. He feels that the time is not enough for both lesson and class work. He relies on homework so that students can do the writing at their own pace. This is because many studies have shown that providing extensive amount of time for language is important, especially for teaching of writing skill. This is to mean that it provides students with practice in its use. For instance, Wallace *et al.* (2004) stated that "...the more time students have to study the facts, a principle or practice a skill, the better they learn."

4.4.5 Teachers' Ways of Giving Feedback

Generally, writing is seen as an individual effort and skill, therefore, the teachers' role is to share in the process by offering constructive feedback as well as correcting errors. It is always helpful to have different strategies when responding to errors found in students' writing activity. However, the results obtained from both teachers and students indicated that teachers' corrections for students' errors were inadequate. Teachers mostly focused on grammatical problems of the paragraph during correction

and would not give written feedback for the correction. This is because of lack of time, teachers being fed up with the students' behaviour and the challenging nature of the task itself. Teacher four (T4) stated as indicate below:

Assessing students' exercise books during writing lesson takes much time. Therefore, I do not assess all components of paragraph because I do not have the time to do that. Besides, all students are not able to finish their works on time. So I usually focus on the topic sentence of the paragraph. I cannot even give feedback to all the students.

As can be observed in the statement above, the teacher seems to concentrate more on correcting grammar because of time and the claim that students are not able to finish writing on time. Similarly, teacher ten (T10) stated as given below:

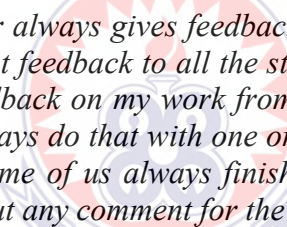
Almost all of the students are poor at writing. Any time I find any grammatical error I pick it up. I would show the work of one or two students to the whole class when they all finish writing their paragraphs and I encourage students to give comments on each other's error. This will help students to produce good sentences in their paragraphs and I believe that effective composing should begin from constructing correct grammatical clauses and sentence.

According to this teacher, students always make grammar mistakes. The teacher concerns with correcting grammar. According to her assumption, giving feedback on grammar problems will help students to produce meaningful sentences during paragraph writing. As a result, she encourages students to give feedback on their colleagues' grammatical mistakes. However, during her class observation she did not ask students to comment on their colleagues' mistakes. The researcher observed that the teacher came to the classroom with corrected students' papers. The papers were students' written assignment, which the teacher had taken with her home for correction. After giving each student his or her paper, she selected some grammatically incorrect sentences from two students' scripts and wrote them on the blackboard. Then she

pointed out each error as she discussed it with the class: errors of verb tense, sentence structure, and spelling.

As can be deduced from the above statements of teachers, they tend to be preoccupied with grammar when they provide feedback to students' writing. However, according to Haider (2012), when teacher's feedback is majorly on grammar corrections, students are led to think that writing means correct grammar and may neglect or may not understand the elements of good paragraph.

When students were asked the same question on the kind of feedback teachers give to them on their writing tasks, student eleven (S11) said,



Our teacher always gives feedback to one or two students. She does not feedback to all the students. I have not gotten written feedback on my work from my teacher before. The teacher always do that with one or two students and that is all since some of us always finish late. She then lives the class without any comment for the rest of the students.

Also, student eight (S16) said,

The teacher always generalizes all the common problems on all the students in the class after going through one or two students' exercise books. This is not applicable to every student because our points of weakness are not the same. He do not give feedback to all of us.

Irrespective of when students finish their work, they need feedback from their teachers. They are aware that feedback is necessary. Black and William (1998) as cited in Mc Arthur *et al.* (2008) strongly argued that teachers need to give feedback that gives each student a specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses. This means teachers must provide feedback for every student.

In this discussion, teachers seem to give less attention to organization, unity, adequacy of a paragraph, punctuation and capitalization in the paragraph during the correction of the students' paragraph. In addition, as can be understood from the data gathered, most of the teachers did not use effective ways of responding to students' written work. Peer correction was not also given attention because of time constraint. However, it is important as stated by Harmer (2006) "Correcting is important, but it can be time consuming . . ." In addition, Mi (2009) outlines that students experience through peer review provide valuable opportunities to improve their reading and writing ability as they discuss issues such as writing contents, organization, grammatical structures and the correct word choice. Finally, the feedback provided for the students focused on mostly on sentence structure and sometimes on spelling. Thus, teachers' ways of giving feedback could affect students' paragraph writing practice.

4.5 Summary of Research Question Two

The second research question was to assess the major causes of problems students in Senior High Schools encounter in paragraph writing. The research question strategically aimed at obtaining data on the causes that could affect the achievement of students' effective paragraph writing. Consequently, the major factors that trigger the difficulties of effective paragraph writing by students were found from both the students' and the teachers' related factors. The students' related factors include; lack of knowledge on strategic use of target language, students' writing apprehension, lack of vocabulary and lack of regular practice while the teachers' related factors were found to be lack of time, teachers being fed up with the students' behaviour and the challenging nature of the teaching task itself. This is in agreement with Hailemariam (2011) assertion that the possible causes of students' problems in EFL paragraph

writing are inadequate exposure of target language, lack of practice, problem in writing apprehension, lack of appropriate feedback, lack of vocabulary, and carelessness.

4.6 Methods Teachers Employed to Help Students Overcome their Problems in Paragraph Writing

In line with this research question, teachers were interviewed on the strategies that they employ to help students improve upon their ability to write good paragraphs. The result of their responses is given in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Views of methods teachers employed to help students overcome their difficulty in paragraph writing

Methods teachers employed	Frequency	Percentage
They motivated their students to practice paragraph writing at their leisure time	7	35.0
They rely on regular feedback	5	25.0
They guide students to plan or organize well	3	15.0
They teach their students how to come out with good topic sentences in paragraphs	1	5.0
They give their students more time to practice writing in the classroom	4	20.0
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In this regard, (35%) of the sample size interviewed indicated that they motivate their students to practice paragraph writing at their leisure time. For instance, teacher two (T2) said:

I think that one of the ways of getting students to be able to write good paragraphs is by motivating them. If students are motivated to practice paragraph writing, I'm sure they will be able to do better. Some of them

are afraid of making mistakes but as teachers we should try to let them know that mistakes are part of life. They need to know that the more one practices something the better the person will master it. So we need to motivate students to help them write acceptable paragraphs.

As can be deduced from the statement of this teacher, he has come to the realization that motivating the students to practice good paragraph writing can offer substantial help to the students to be able to write acceptable paragraphs.

Another teacher T12 said:

Sometime I do my best to ensure that my students get the concept of paragraph writing but I realize they don't seem to have that desire to practice paragraph writing. So what I do is that I try to motivate them to keep trying their possible best. I know that as I continuously praise them for their little efforts they will improve.

Another teacher also said as given below:

You see, motivation is good. If you motivate somebody to do something you make the person feel that he or she can do that something. So for me I will say that if teachers motivate the students which is what I always do, they will be able to write paragraphs better.

Also, twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents stated that they rely on constant feedback to help their students improve on their efforts to write good paragraphs. In this regards, teacher eleven (T11) said:

Well, feedback from teachers can be of importance to students as far as paragraph writing is concerned. Undeniably, if students get feedback from teachers on their writing assignments I think it will help them get to know their mistakes and try to correct them. So I actually believe that feedback from teachers is very necessary and teachers must do well to provide feedback to students on their performance in their writing tasks.

Again, teacher seventeen (T17) claimed as follows:

Feedback by all standards is important. Students need to know whether or not they are doing well in their writing assignments. Teachers need to let them know where they have done well and where they need to improve upon. When students are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, it will give them the opportunity to appreciate their strengths and work hard on their weaknesses for improvement.

Similarly, another respondent, teacher five (S5) said:

I always make sure that I tell my students why their essays are having one problem or the other. This, I believe will help them to know their weak points so that they can improve upon them. So for me I always give them feedback according to what I see in their essays in relation to good paragraph writing.

It was also realized that good planning or organization is one of the ways that teachers help students to improve upon their paragraph writing abilities. When the respondents were asked to indicate their views on what they do to help students improve on their efforts in paragraph writing, twelve percent (15%) of them said that they guide their students to do good planning or organization of their paragraphs to come out with acceptable paragraphs. One of the teachers indicated as given below:

Good planning or organization is very important in paragraph writing. If a student plans his or her paragraph well you will see the ideas arranged in a logical order. There will be a topic sentence followed by supporting sentences and then concluding sentence. This will make the paragraph meaningful. So, I always entreat that my students practice good planning or organization in paragraph writing.

Also, teacher two (T2) claimed as indicated:

To write a good paragraph, it is important that the student has a good planning or organization. I have always told my students to make sure they organize their paragraphs well.

Another teacher said as follows:

Good planning of a paragraph can help students to write better paragraphs. So we the teachers have always asked students to make sure that they plan their paragraphs very well before writing. And I can say that this strategy is gradually helping the students to do better in their paragraph writing assignments.

Another proportion of the respondents representing five percent (5%) indicated that using good topic sentence in paragraph writing is relevant in producing acceptable paragraphs and that is what they do to help their students to overcome their paragraph writing problems. One of the teachers claimed as follows:

Most students write their paragraphs without topic sentences. However, in order for them to write meaningful paragraphs, I think they need to use good topic sentence in their paragraphs which is what we have always asked them to do.

Another teacher stated as indicated below:

The use of good topic sentence in paragraph writing is very important. Usually, I emphasize on the use of good topic sentence. It provides direction of the development of the paragraph. Therefore, students need to use good topic sentences in their paragraph writing. It will help them to have a focus so that they will be able to write meaningful paragraphs.

Again, another teacher said:

I know that good topic sentence can help the students to write better paragraphs. Hence, I have always told them do everything possible to get relevant topic sentence for every paragraph that they write. And I can say that gradually, this is helping them (the students) to improve upon their efforts to write paragraphs.

Furthermore, it was noticed that twenty percent (20%) of the respondents said they give their students more time to practice writing in the classroom as a way of helping students to overcome their paragraph writing problems. One of the teachers said as given below:

I can testify that there has not always been enough time for students to practice writing in the classroom. But I think that if students are given enough time to practice paragraph writing in the classroom, which is what I always do, it will help them improve on their ability to write meaningful paragraphs.

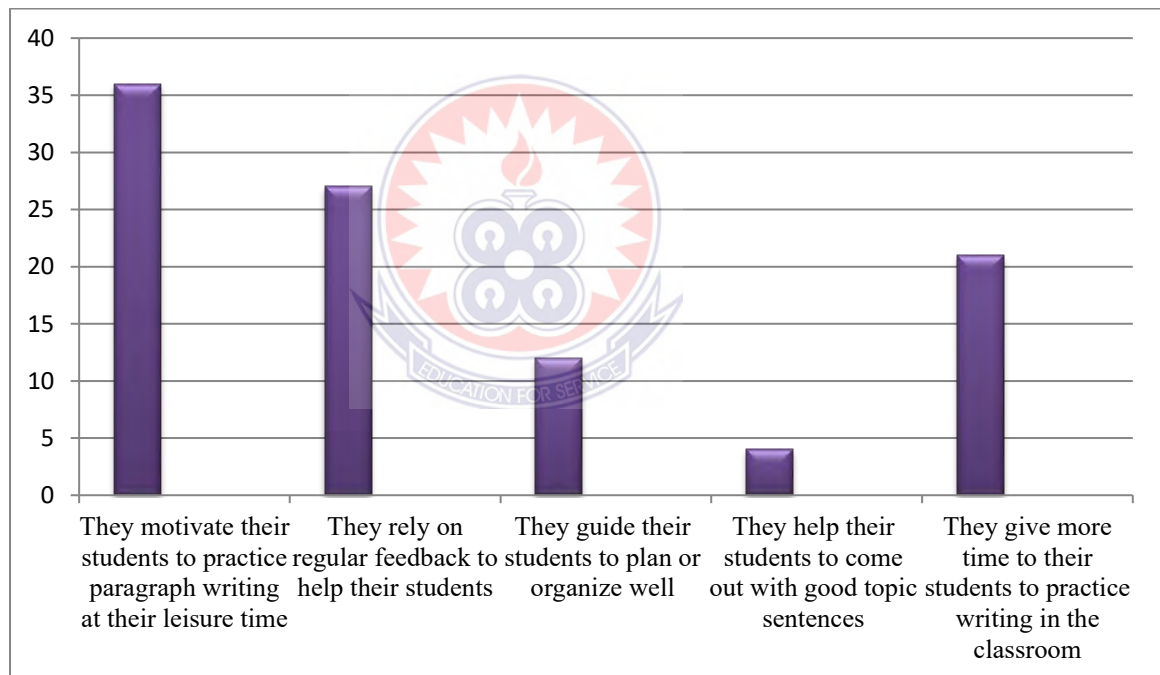
Also, one of the respondents, a teacher said:

Students are always in a hurry to finish their writing assignments before time, so they seem not to care about what is supposed to there or not. They just write what comes to their minds. So we the teachers have decided to always give them enough time for their writing tasks and I think that students are gradually improving on their paragraph writing.

Again, another teacher claimed as indicated below:

The time that is allocated to students for writing assignment in the classroom is woefully inadequate. Teachers have therefore decided to give students more time in the classroom so that they can improve on their writing ability.

Fig. 4.1: Below is a bar chart showing the views of teachers on what they employ to help students overcome their difficulties in paragraph writing.



According to the class observation and interview results, it was clear that both teachers and students do not use enough strategies to improve on students’ paragraph writing skills. All the teachers claimed that giving writing assignment as homework gives students more time and encourage students to practice writing outside the classroom since there is not much time for them to practice writing in the classroom. For instance, teacher two (T2) said as follow:

For most students the place to learn writing is in the classroom. But class time is restricted to 40 minutes. Students cannot finish the work that I give them within the time limit because they would brainstorm the paragraph in their native language before translate it into English. As a result I do not have much time to use different strategies rather than giving writing as homework.

As can be inferred from the above data, classroom is the only place that students practice writing. However, the strategy used by students to produce ideas to write their paragraphs takes much time. Therefore, the teacher does not have enough time to use different strategies. So, she gives writing assignments as homework. To support this idea as Italo (1999:9) states that “There seems to be a general tendency among language teachers in Ethiopia to relegate writing to homework for fear of the amount of work and time involved in correcting students’ writing because of the large number of students in a class.”

Students need feedback from their teachers while they are in the process of writing paragraphs, to help them improve on their writing skills as one student twenty-seven said,

I expect my teacher to give me feedback on my work whether I am on the right track or not.

In relation to this, students indicated in the interview that they did not receive help from their teachers. Student thirty (S30) stated,

I do not know what to do to improve on my writing skill. My teacher did not teach me any strategy that could help me in paragraph writing.

Again, student twenty-nine (S29) stated that,

I do not have experience in writing paragraphs. Besides, we are not motivated to practice and improve on our writing skill.

Teachers need to motivate their students to practice writing as stated by Harmer (2007) “The main task of the teacher is to motivate and provoke the students.” Also, according to Hyland (2003), teachers need to explore different ways of using knowledge of language to guide students towards a conscious understanding of good elements of paragraph writing. During a class observation, the researcher noticed that English language teachers wrote some bulletin points on the blackboard and made students to use them as a prewriting strategy. This is a good beginning however; teachers are expected to use additional strategies to increase the amount of encouragement and support to students in their efforts to practice paragraph writing.

4.7 Summary of Research Question Three

The third research question was to ascertain how teachers attempt to help students in Senior High Schools to overcome their problems in paragraph writing. To this effect, it was found that both teachers and students do not use enough strategies to improve on students’ paragraph writing skills. This confirms the result of a study undertaken by Mohammad and Hazarika (2016) to find out the difficulties that Najran University students have in writing skills. The data were collected through the use of a questionnaire and written samples of paragraphs. The researcher analyzed a sample of fifty (50) students at the Preparatory Year Program. The study revealed that students passed their exams through means such as memorizing the answer paragraphs rather than applying the proper strategies to write good paragraphs. In this study, it was realized that students should be motivated by their teachers to practice paragraph writing, students should be given feedback from teachers to help them improve on their efforts to write good paragraphs, more time should be given to students to practice

writing in the classroom, students should practice good planning or organization which can help them improve on their paragraph writing ability, and students should use good topic sentences in writing their paragraphs.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Paragraphs written by students were analyzed and discussed thematically in respect of each of the research questions that were proposed in chapter one. The analysis of the data from the instruments used in collecting the data was comprehensively done, outlining the major problems students in Senior High Schools encounter in paragraph writing, the causes of students' problems in paragraph writing in Senior High Schools, and how teachers attempt to help students in Senior High Schools to overcome their problems in paragraph writing. Notably, sampled students' paragraphs had disorganized sentences and therefore, suffered a lot from grammatical accuracy. Students lack the strategy of applying characteristics of good paragraph in their paragraph writing assignments. Also, two main sources of contributory factors of students' difficulties of effective paragraph writing were found to be students' and the teachers' related factors. Moreover, it was ascertained that both teachers and students do not use enough strategies to improve on students' paragraph writing skills. Teachers claimed that the most suitable strategy of helping students to overcome their problems in paragraph writing is by giving writing assignment to students as homework as this gives students more time and encourage them to practice writing outside the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to assess students' paragraph writing in the essays of Senior High School in the Savannah Region. This chapter, therefore, presents the summary of the findings, conclusion as drawn from the analysis and the corresponding recommendations on how to improve upon students' paragraph writing problems based on the findings of the study.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

Paragraph writing is an indispensable skill that has many advantages for the targeted learners in terms of developing better language proficiency, and giving the learners a better opportunity for their future career. As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of the study was to assess students' paragraph writing problems with reference to students in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School in the Savannah Region. The study focused on assessing major problems that students encounter when they write paragraphs, identifying causes for students' problems in writing paragraphs, and exploring how English language teachers attempt to help students in overcoming the problems.

A descriptive research design was employed together with a qualitative research method in trying to address the issues students face in paragraph writing. In the process, twenty teachers who taught English in the aforementioned schools were selected as a sample subject with two hundred and sixty students as a sample through a purposive sampling technique. In order to be able to accomplish the objectives of the study, four different data collection tools were adopted. These were document analysis of

paragraphs written by students, the use of questionnaire for both English language teachers and students, interviews, and classroom observation.

The study revealed that the students had a lot of problems in writing paragraphs. When the researcher carried out the analysis it was found that the most serious problem among students' difficulties in paragraph writing was cohesion in paragraphing. Other problems include; lack of unity in the paragraph, poor organization, poor paragraph development, problem of topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and capitalization problem. The students' problems in writing paragraph were mainly attributed to students' related factors such as lack of knowledge of strategic use of the target language, students' writing apprehension, lack of vocabulary and lack of regular practice. Also, it was found that teachers' related factor that contributes to the students' problems in paragraph writing was the teachers' ways of giving feedback. Again, the findings indicated that English teachers were not employing different strategies to help students to write good paragraphs and also, teachers' activities to assist students to write good paragraphs were not adequate.

5.3 Conclusions

The problems that students of Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School encounter in their efforts to write English paragraphs include problem of organization such as inappropriate and illogical arrangement of sentences and poor flow of ideas; problem of unity because majority of the students' paragraph begins to talk about one issue and all of a sudden jumps to talk about a different issue without any conclusion on the former idea; problem of paragraph development because students' paragraphs do not give explanation or illustration for clarification of the ideas; supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and capitalization

problems. All in all, students have serious difficulties in applying the characteristics of good paragraph writing in their paragraph writing assignments.

The causes of the above-mentioned problems emanate from students' lack of knowledge on strategic use of target language, students writing apprehension, lack of vocabulary and lack of regular practice, teachers' ways of giving feedback, students' passiveness to learning paragraph writing, less attention given to paragraph teaching and learning by teachers and students respectively, lack of enough time to practice paragraph writing in classrooms, teachers being fed up with students' appalling behaviour towards paragraph writing, and the challenging nature of the teaching task itself. It was also realized that teachers' feedback on paragraphs written by their students are mainly focused on correcting grammar and spelling errors to the neglect of correcting errors on organization of ideas, unity, paragraph development, and topic sentences.

Again, it was noticed that students need to be motivated by their teachers to practice paragraph writing, students should be given appropriate feedback from teachers regarding their performance in their paragraph writing assignments to help them improve on their efforts to write good paragraphs, more time should be given to students to practice paragraph writing in the classroom, students should practice good planning or organization which can help them improve on their paragraph writing ability, and students should use good topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences in writing their paragraphs.

5.4 Recommendation

On grounds of the findings and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration for the purposes of improving on the writing skills of students in writing paragraphs.

1. Effective paragraph writing is a skill that requires continuous practice. Hence, it is recommended that students should practice writing as frequently as possible both in the classroom and outside the class.
2. The inclusion of the three parts of a paragraph namely; topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences when writing a paragraph is vital. Students must therefore, make sure these three parts are present in their paragraphs and also ensure that the sentences or ideas in the paragraphs are appropriately and logically arranged to keep a smooth flow of ideas.
3. The students should develop vocabulary skills for generating ideas so as to be able to use consistent words and complete sentences which will help them reduce their writing anxiety. The supporting sentences in their paragraphs should exclusively support the topic sentence and provide details for only one idea in their paragraphs.
4. The findings of the current study have revealed that the stages of good paragraph writing receive very little attention in Bole Senior High School and St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/Technical School English paragraph writing classrooms because most students usually complete their paragraph writing assignment without practicing the stages of writing. It is therefore, recommended that students should use the stages appropriately when practicing paragraph writing and the teachers should also do well to help students to apply those stages as they practice paragraph writing.

5. The teachers should do well to train students to practice paragraph writing more in the classroom by giving them enough time. This will give students the opportunity to practice writing in the classroom and exchange ideas with their peers and this will eventually help them to reduce their problems in paragraph writing in English.
6. In teaching paragraph writing and giving feedback, the teachers should pay attention to all features of good paragraph writing than focusing mainly on the mechanical aspects such as grammar and spelling. In addition, teachers should use different ways of giving feedback for instance, peer editing, students working in groups, and demonstrating how to overcome the challenges.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Studies

1. To be able to propound a model that is authentic enough to describe a general pattern of the paragraph writing in the essays of Senior High School students across all the regions of Ghana, it is recommended that a similar study be carried out throughout the country and the results compared.
2. A comparative study of the use of paragraph writing by students at the Senior High School and university levels is also essential. This will unravel developmental differences in paragraph writing as the learner moves forward towards achieving proficiency of the target language.
3. It is recommended that future studies should be conducted on whether or not students' lack of reading extensively can cause students' inability to write effective paragraphs.

4. Future studies should also investigate whether other factors such as textbooks and the content of the syllabus can affect students' effective writing of paragraphs.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is to be used for a research by **GOLLO EDGARD WOOD, Master of Philosophy in Teaching English As A Second Language; University of Education, Winneba**. Topic for the research: **Paragraph Writing in the Essays of Senior High School Students: The Case of SHS in the Savannah Region**. It would, therefore, be appreciated if you could fill it as sincerely as possible to ensure a successful research. Your responses are entirely voluntary, confidential and are only for academic purposes. The survey is designed to be anonymous such that your responses cannot be connected with you.

Please, fill out by ticking each question once unless required differently

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Please, how old are you (tick one)?

18-30 years []

31-45 years []

46-59 years []

60 or more []

2. Gender

Female []

Male []

3. Marital Status

Married []

Single []

Divorced []

Widow/Widower []

4. What is your highest level of education?

Primary []

Vocational/Technical []

Tertiary []

JHS/Middle school []

SHS/O'level []

None []

5. Religious Affiliation

- Christian Traditional
Muslim Other(s),
specify.....

6. Main occupational status

- Farmer Teacher Artisan
Trader Security officer Student

SECTION B: STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE ON PARAGRAPH WRITING

7. Do you know what paragraphing is in essay writing?

- Yes No

8. Have you ever been taught how to write paragraphs?

- Yes No

9. Do you think paragraph writing is a difficult aspect of composition writing?

- Yes No

10. If yes, what difficulties do you encounter in paragraph writing? Tick as many as appropriate.

- Punctuation Spelling Paragraph development
Getting the correct topic sentence Getting good supporting sentences

Using cohesive ties Capitalization Indentation
Other(s), specify.....

11. By assessing yourself, what will you say your strength is in paragraph writing?

- Bad Fair Good Very good Excellent

12. Do you have an idea regarding different patterns of paragraph development in essay writing such as narration, description, process or classification?

Yes [] No []

13. If yes, indicate which of the following paragraph pattern development you are conversant with.

Narrative writing [] Descriptive writing []

Process writing [] Classification writing []

14. Which of these strategies do you think can help to overcome students' difficulty in paragraph writing? Tick as many as appropriate.

Students should be motivated to practice paragraph writing []

Writing grammatically correct simple sentences []

Good planning or organization before writing []

Feedback from teachers []

Other(s), specify.....

SECTION C: THE TEACHERS' FACTOR IN PARAGRAPH WRITING

15. Are you a professional English Language teacher?

Yes [] No []

Other(s), specify.....

16. What is your qualification?

[] Diploma in..... [] First Degree in.....

[] Master's Degree in..... [] Ph.D. in.....

17. What other subject(s) do you teach apart from English Language?

Social studies [] Mathematics [] Integrated Science []

Other(s), specify.....

18. How long have you been teaching English Language?

1 – 5 years []

6 – 10 years []

11 – 15 years []

16 – 20 years []

20 years and above []

19. Do you teach your students how to write paragraphs in your composition lessons?

Yes []

No []

20. If yes, which of the following do you teach your students? Tick as appropriate.

The difference between a topic sentence and other supporting sentences []

How to link an idea from one paragraph to the next []

How to separate one paragraph from the other []

Where to locate a topic sentence in a paragraph []

Other(s), specify.....

21. Which of these do you pay more attention to in teaching your students paragraph writing? Tick as many as appropriate.

How to generate ideas relevant to a topic sentence []

Organization in paragraph writing []

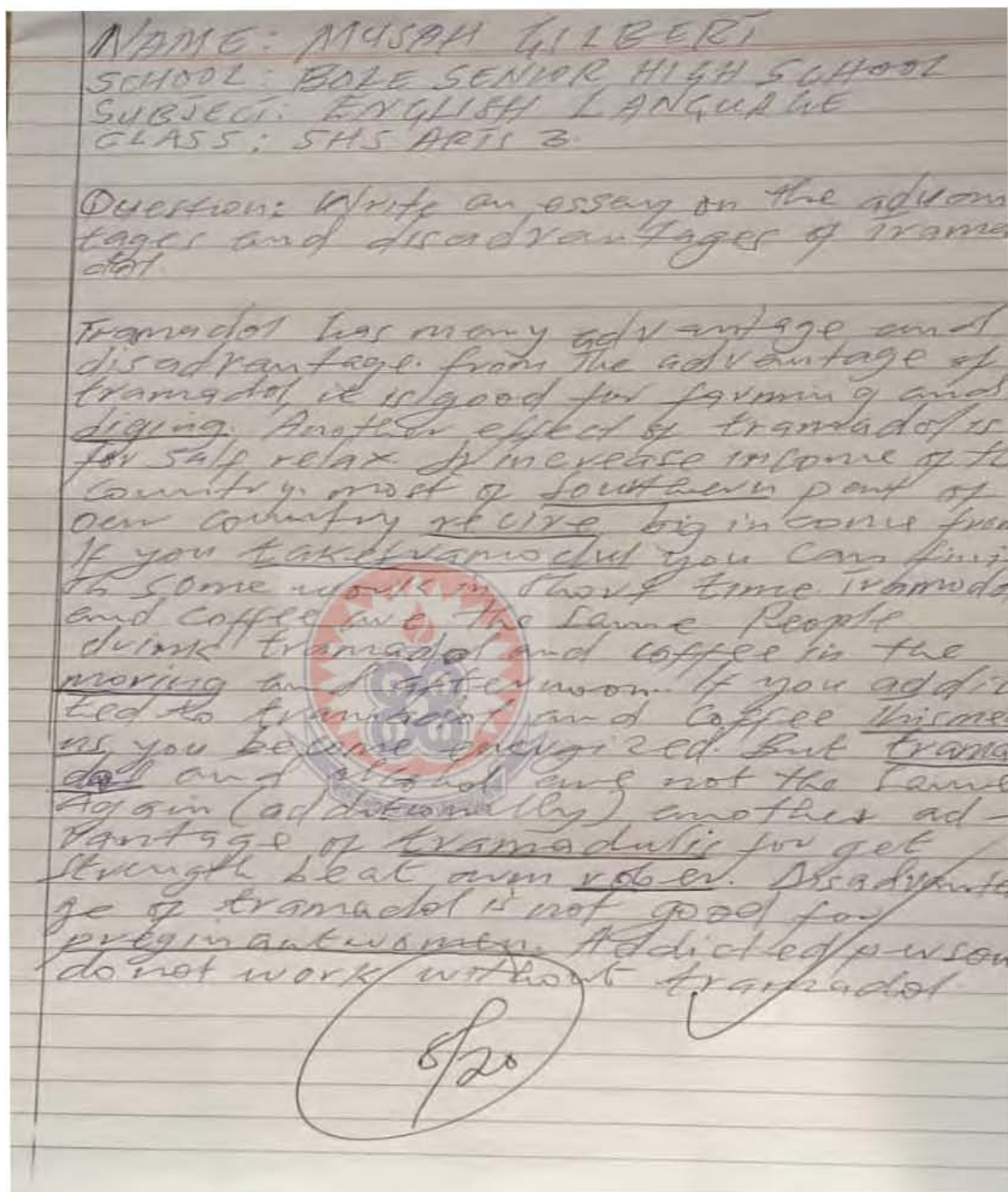
Unity and paragraph development []

Punctuation and capitalization []

Other(s), specify.....

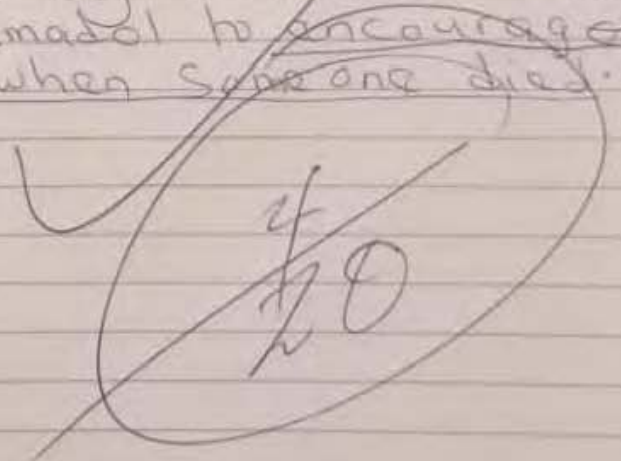
Thank you.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLED STUDENTS' ESSAYS



NAME : Dari Haldia
 SCHOOL : St. Anthony of Padua Senior High/
 Technical School.
 Subject : English Language
 Question : Write an essay on the advantages
 and disadvantages of tramadol.
 Form : Business 3

Tramadol in our country has advantages
 and disadvantages. The advantages of
 tramadol it increase social life be-
 tween the societies. People need alcohol
 after they finished taking tramadol.
 This associated to unprotected sex.
 It is a means of giving and taking
 different information. People use tramadol
 as income source generating by selling
 tramadol. When two people or three
 people take tramadol together they
 will easily exchange different information.
 If we see the disadvantages of tramadol
 affected our our health, economy
 and our time. People spend always
 many money to buy tramadol. They
 use that tramadol to encourage
 their friends when someone died.



NAME: NYOMIII MATTHEW
SCHOOL: St. Anthony Of Padua Senior High
Technical School
SUBJECT: English Language
QUESTION: Write an essay on the advan-
tages and disadvantages of tramadol
FORM: ARTS 3

Tramadol has so many advantages and disad-
vantages. The advantages of tramadol is
taking tramadol is a source of happiness. It
has speed up the activity of our body es-
pecially our nervous system. There are dif-
ferent drugs in the world that drugs
can be grouped legal and illegal drug. Both
drugs can controlled the activity of our
body. They have contain different chemical
and affected our body. For example do-
mestic drugs in United States are from
tobacco, alcohol and tramadol etc. Tra-
madol have contain chemicals and increas-
the activity of our body. It have not ad-
vantage, but it have many disadvantages.
It affect economy. It has affected the
of our times and it has affected our in-
ney and so many. Tramadol is no good for
our life.

NAME: Mahama Hawa
 SCHOOL: Bole Senior High Secondary School
 SUBJECT: English Language
 QUESTION: Write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of tramadol.
 FORM: ARTS 3

There are many advantages and disadvantages of tramadol. These are: Tramadol is common in Ghana. All people take tramadol. Tramadol give power. Tramadol have little advantage. Tramadol sellers get many money. When fathers take tramadol children learn and practice taking drugs. This is advantage. It make us strong. When people spend money. This is disadvantage. Other advantage when people take tramadol become happy. When someone hungry or talk with other person he take tramadol he can forget that problem.

3/10

NAME: Jerry Ernest

School: Bole Senior High

Subject: English Language

Write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of tramadol

Tramadol is a medicine people sell in a shop. Many people take tramadol. Tramadol is not good. Tramadol has a disadvantage on human health. Many people love tramadol because it increased their strength. But that is not for every time. After taking it that person returns and returned on his first person's life. Smoke cigarette also a bad thing. Talking alone after drinking tramadol alone no problem. But smoke cigarette and talking all is big problem. Let me name importance of taking tramadol. In our village in farmers do difficult work. They take tramadol and get strong for work. More importance are others. People take tramadol get brave. Let a they don't shine.

2/10

APPENDIX C: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

S/N	Activity	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	Teaching and learning materials (TLMs) available in the classroom	0	1	1	0
2	Teacher using teaching and learning materials in delivering the lesson	0	0	0	0
	Type of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) used in teaching	T1	T2	T3	T4
3	Wall charts	1	0	0	0
4	Flashcards	0	0	1	0
5	Posters	1	0	0	0
	Teacher's knowledge on the use of teaching and learning materials (TLMs)	T1	T2	T3	T4
6	Using the right teaching and learning material (TLM)	0	0	0	0
7	Having the requisite skills in using TLM to teach	0	0	0	0
	Difficulties encountered by teacher in using TLMs for teaching	T1	T2	T3	T4
8	Having the ability to use the TLMs correctly	0	0	0	0
9	Enough time to use the TLMs effectively	1	1	1	1

T1 means Teacher 1

T2 means Teacher 2

T3 means Teacher 3

T4 means Teacher 4

0 means absence of that thing

1 means presence of that thing

