

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW ENGLISH COMPOSITION  
PROFICIENCY AMONG JHS STUDENTS IN THE CENTRAL TONGU  
DISTRICT**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



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PROFICIENCY AMONG JHS STUDENTS IN THE CENTRAL TONGU  
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**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
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**Department of Basic Education  
School of Education and Life-Long Learning**

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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, **Gifty Ama Adom**, declare except quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**Signature** .....

**Date**.....

### Supervisors' Declaration

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

**Principal Supervisor:** Professor Kwesi Adomako

**Signature** .....

**Date**.....

**Co-Supervisor:** Professor Mrs. Emma Sarah Eshun

**Signature** .....

**Date**.....

## **DEDICATION**

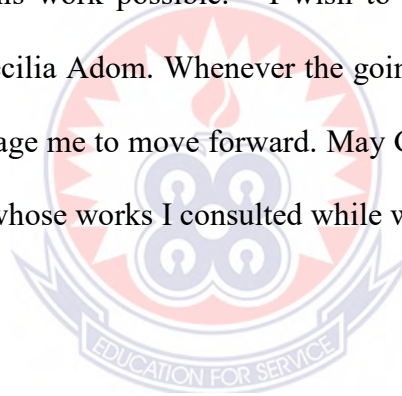
To my children, Nelly Nunana and Inez Eyram whom I denied motherhood at a very tender age to pursue this course.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

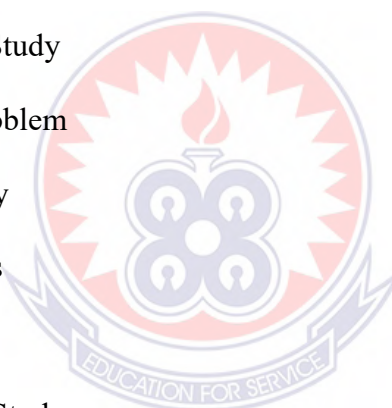
To God be the Glory! I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Kwesi Adomako and Professor Mrs. Emma Sarah Eshun of the Department of Ghanaian Language Education, University of Education, and the Department of Basic Education Winneba respectively, for their professional guidance, advice, encouragement and goodwill with which they guided this work. I am really very grateful.

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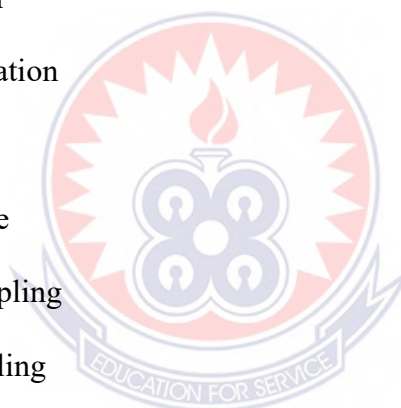


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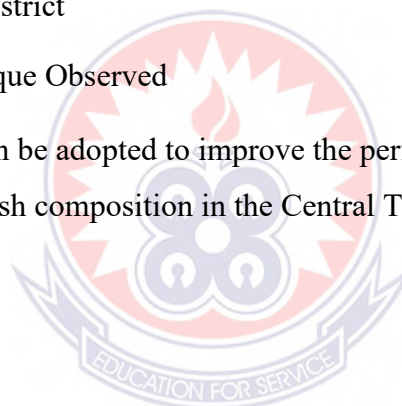
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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated factors contributing to low English composition proficiency among JHS students in the Central Tongu District. Guided by Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing, the research explored the factors influencing performance, the extent of their impact, teaching methods employed, and strategies for improving outcomes in English composition. The study utilised a mixed methods with sequential explanatory design, allowing for a exhaustive understanding of both quantitative patterns and qualitative insights. A total of 300 J.H.S. students and 90 English language teachers were selected through stratified random sampling and maximum variation sampling, respectively. Using a structured closed-ended questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide, and an observation guide, data were gathered. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative responses were subjected to thematic analysis to interpret deeper insights and contextual experiences. It was revealed that students' poor performance in English composition is largely attributed to inadequate school infrastructure, insufficient parental support, unruly student behaviour, and lack of professional support systems such as counsellors. These contributing factors, particularly late exam preparation, lack of revision time, and poor role modelling at home are perceived by both teachers and students to significantly impact academic performance in English composition. Based on the major findings and the conclusions drawn, it was recommended that the Ghana Education Service (GES), through the Central Tongu District Education Directorate, should invest in improving foundational school infrastructure, such as libraries, access to electricity, and classroom resources to create a more enabling environment for teaching and learning English composition, particularly in underserved rural circuits where these deficits are most acute. Also, school administrators and the District Education Directorate should design school-based intervention programmes focused on strengthening exam preparation strategies, including time-bound revision sessions, early syllabus completion, and mentorship schemes involving successful alumni as role models to inspire student effort and focus in writing.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Overview

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

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

English Language serves as the primary language of communication in our post-primary, tertiary institutions as well as the official language of the country. Therefore, students need viable English language to function effectively or perform better. Fema, (2003) was of the opinion that an individual is functionally literate when he gained the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enables him to participate effectively in all those activities in which literacy is usually presumed in his culture or group. English language is typically made up of four fundamental skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. English is the language used in teaching in our schools and mandatory school subject which an individual should pass at each level of education (Danladi, 2008).

In today's interconnected and multicultural world, advancements in technology and the widespread use of the internet enable people to communicate and engage with others across the globe. In the opinion of McLaren (2007), these innovations encapsulated offer new horizons in the labor market and in the economy. With globalization, there is a desire for flexibility most of the time, and even language proficiency in a foreign language is no longer an added qualification but also a prerequisite for professional success. Education

provides the child with room to discover himself /herself and become useful and autonomous (McLaren, 2007). Gordon (2008) says that the various levels of education to which Ghanaian context is applicable are the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary. For the country to catch up with the world, Ghana has been amongst other developing countries in pursuing economic and technological advancement through education. Given that this is the case, a stroll down the education road uncovers that the performance of education in Ghana has declined. The people seem to believe that the quality of education in Ghana decreased significantly (Meyer, 2008).

Education in the past has been one of the institutions in every human society. Since early man, it has been an unrelenting force that has transformed societies and enhanced the lives of all its alumni. Constructing a nation depends on education. Because of this, education has been described as a vehicle of national development (Afful-Broni & Ziggah, 2007). The school therefore is a public education agency. It has been assumed that all the children who pass through any public school are able to read and write. The English Composition therefore is a significant part of this writing (Meyer, 2008). The child's ability to read and understand any given work is evidence that the child is able to perform well in any field of study. There is hence the mandate that the teacher will teach students the techniques and skills of English Composition (Montanari, 2014). Unfortunately, there is the mandate that poor achievement of the students in the English language in recent public examinations has been cited as an underlying reason for decline in overall academic performance and education quality. Oluwole, (2008) felt that "difficulty in comprehending completely the contents and concepts of the various subjects of the curriculum taught via the target language seem to be one of the most serious problems with which English as a second language

learners struggle in their particular field of study. This might be because of their weaknesses in the English language (medium of instruction) that could negatively affect their performance as a whole.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

English is the official language of instruction in Ghana and serves as the medium through which learners access knowledge across subjects from the upper primary level onward. Competence in English composition is therefore critical, as writing reflects learners' ability to organise ideas, apply grammatical conventions, and communicate meaning effectively. Weaknesses in writing affect overall academic performance and limit learners' ability to succeed in other subjects where extended writing is required (Bones & Lambe, 2007).

Persistent concerns about students' performance in English have been documented in national examination reports and empirical studies. Chief Examiners' Reports of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) repeatedly identify poor spelling, limited vocabulary, weak sentence construction, grammatical errors, and shallow content development as major causes of failure. Ponera, Mhonyiwa, and Mrutu (2011) and Kitta (2004) highlight factors such as lack of qualified teachers, insufficient teaching and learning resources, and understaffing as contributors to low performance. Teacher-related variables, including low motivation, attitudes towards students and the English Language, poor instructional practices, limited content knowledge, and classroom emotions, have also been linked to high failure rates (Frenzel et al., 2009; Klusmann et al., 2008; Mazana et al., 2019; Michael, 2015).

Language policy and bilingual education models further influence student outcomes. Owu-Ewie (2006) notes that the early-exit transition model previously used in Ghana

forced students to switch to English as the medium of instruction before they were ready, which created a jarring adjustment and limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Insufficient supervision, inadequate resources, and limited exposure to the target language are key factors that can explain why many Ghanaian students perform poorly in English and other academic subjects.

Despite government initiatives aimed at improving English instruction including teacher training, provision of teaching materials, and introduction of ICT in schools (Kitta, 2004; Sumra & Katabaro, 2014; Kafyulilo, Fisser, Pieters, & Voogt, 2015) students' performance in English remains low. Poor proficiency in English acts as a barrier to individual and national development and is reflected in subpar performance on international assessments (Bethell, 2016). HakiElimu (2012) emphasises that students' examination results are a key measure of education quality, while Topçu, Erbilgin, and Arikan (2016) argue that improving students' learning experiences is essential for raising English performance.

Although prior research has explored factors associated with English performance, most studies focus on certain levels of education or students' perspectives (Joseph, 2013; Kilasi, 2017; Mazana et al., 2019), limited attention has been given to rural and deprived communities where contextual challenges such as linguistic barriers, resource scarcity, and socio-economic constraints are pronounced. In Central Tongu District, many students struggle to construct meaningful sentences, write coherent essays, and apply correct grammar. Chief Examiners' Reports from 2018 and 2019 confirm problems including poor spelling, limited vocabulary, weak sentence structure, misuse of prepositions, subject-verb disagreement, poor handwriting, and inaccurate use of capital letters. Students often resort to copying passages verbatim or using inappropriate words, highlighting the depth of the composition problem.

The problem, therefore, is that Junior High School students in Central Tongu District demonstrate persistent low proficiency in English composition, and the factors contributing to this challenge including linguistic difficulties, instructional practices, school-related constraints, and socio-cultural influences remain insufficiently investigated.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study explored factors contributing to low English composition proficiency among JHS students in the Central Tongu District.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives guiding this research encompassed:

1. To determine the factors contributing to low proficiency of J.H.S. students in writing English composition in Central Tongu District.
2. To determine the perceived effects of key factors (e.g., working conditions, indiscipline, late preparation) on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition writing in Central Tongu District.
3. To explore methods/ techniques used by English Language teachers to teach English composition in Central Tongu District.
4. To establish suggestions of teachers in improving the proficiency of J.H.S. students in writing English composition in the Central Tongu District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The question guiding this research comprised:

1. What are the factors responsible for low proficiency of JHS students in writing English composition in Central Tongu District?

2. What are the perceived effects of key factors (e.g., working conditions, indiscipline, late preparation) on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition writing in Central Tongu District?
3. Which techniques do English language teachers employ in teaching English composition skills in the Central Tongu District?
4. What are the suggestions / opinions of teachers in improving proficiency of JHS students in writing English composition in the Central Tongu District?

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

This study is significant because it addresses a clearly observed challenge within Junior High Schools in the Central Tongu District students' low proficiency in English composition. For English language teachers, the findings will provide a clearer understanding of the specific factors such as linguistic difficulties, instructional practices, and classroom constraints that hinder students' writing development. This insight can inform the selection of appropriate teaching strategies, including learner-centred approaches, structured writing exercises, and targeted interventions that respond directly to the realities of classrooms in the district. Teachers can also use the findings to identify areas where professional development or mentoring is needed, making in-service training and workshops more responsive to local challenges.

For school leaders and headteachers, the study offers practical value by highlighting organizational and instructional factors that influence writing proficiency. Understanding these factors can guide classroom supervision, lesson planning, and the design of school-level initiatives to improve student engagement in composition writing. Instructional supervisors can also use the findings to provide more context-

specific guidance that addresses the day-to-day challenges faced by teachers and learners in the district's schools.

At the district level, the study will inform decision-making by the Central Tongu District Education Directorate and other local educational authorities. Insights from the research can guide strategies for deploying qualified English teachers to schools most in need, targeting professional development where it is likely to have the greatest impact, and allocating limited teaching and learning resources more effectively. While the findings are grounded in the district context, they may also be relevant for other rural and semi-rural districts in Ghana that share similar socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the understanding of second language acquisition and writing pedagogy in low-resource, rural school settings. By examining the interplay between instructional approaches, student experiences, and contextual factors, the research generates insights into how composition skills develop under specific linguistic and socio-economic conditions. These insights can inform the development of context-sensitive frameworks for teaching English composition in Ghanaian basic schools and provide a foundation for future studies focused on improving writing outcomes in similar educational environments.

### **1.8 Delimitation and Scope of the Study**

Delimitation refers to the information boundaries of the study that may affect the generalization of the study but are within the researcher's control (Mutai, 2001). The scope of the study is the geographical area within which the study is done (Marylin & Goes, 2013). It also delineates the methodology boundaries. Though this work is to assess the falling standard of academic work of students in general, it focused on the

low proficiency in writing English Composition among students of selected public basic schools within the Central Tongu District in the Volta region. An attempt is however, made to discuss some challenges students and teachers face and feasible recommendations suggested.

The study is conducted in selected schools within the Central Tongu District amidst several schools in the district. In view of this, it may not be possible to generalize the result of this study beyond Central Tongu. However, the study can be replicated in another District or Municipality of the country.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**English Composition:** A form of written expression in English that involves organizing ideas, thoughts, and arguments into coherent sentences and paragraphs. In this study, it refers specifically to narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative writing tasks given to J.H.S. students.

**Proficiency:** The ability of students to effectively express themselves in writing using appropriate grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, sentence structure, and organization. In this study, it reflects students' competence in writing coherent and grammatically correct compositions in English.

**Low Proficiency:** A condition where students demonstrate limited or inadequate ability in expressing themselves clearly and correctly in written English. This may be evidenced by frequent grammatical errors, poor sentence structure, lack of coherence, and weak vocabulary.

**Teaching Methods/Techniques:** The instructional strategies and approaches employed by English Language teachers in delivering lessons on composition writing. These

may include group work, modelling, brainstorming, peer review, and guided writing, among others.

### **1.10 Organization of the Study**

The research is spread over five (5) chapters. Chapter one comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, aim of the research, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, definition of terms and the structure of the study. Chapter two focuses on the literature review. This consists of published writings such as books, journals and newspapers carrying useful information on the problem under study. Chapter three is methodology used for research. It delves in to research paradigm, research approach, research design, setting, population, sample, sampling methods, data collection tools, trustworthiness, validity and reliability of data collection tool, data collection process, data analysis process, and ethical issues. Chapter four involves presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter five presents an overview of the study, conclusions, and recommendations. The chapter further contains the recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter is labelled literature review. It provides ideas that have been discussed by various researchers concerning the issue. Literature review can be defined as a procedure for gathering data from various sources such as journals, articles, newspapers, internet and books that contain ideas concerning the issue under study (Creswell, 2013). Literature review is a broad, comprehensive, detail intensive, systematic and critical appraisal of the scholarly publications, including unpublished scholarly print materials, audio-visuals and personal communications (Creswell, 2007). Reviewing the literature requires researchers, by Hammond and Wellington (2013), to give an overview of what has previously been studied in the area or field of interest of the study. Literature review was directed towards research work done by researcher in related fields. Chapter one has reviewed literature on problems addressed in this study.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This work is beached in Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing, a constructivist model that views reading and writing as dynamic, reciprocal processes between the reader / writer and the text. According to Rosenblatt (1978), reading is not a passive decryption of written symbols, but an active "transaction" where meaning is constructed through the interaction between the reader's prior experiences, emotions, and knowledge, and the words on the page. Similarly, writing is a creative and reflective act, where the writer engages with imagined or real audiences to express and organize thoughts using language drawn from previous reading, lived experiences, and communicative needs.

In the context of the Central Tongu District, where students demonstrate low proficiency in English composition writing, Rosenblatt's theory offers a relevant lens for understanding how a lack of rich reading experiences, insufficient interaction with meaningful texts, and limited opportunities for personal response to reading contribute to weak writing performance. The theory posits that effective writing is inseparable from reading; the more students read and transact meaningfully with texts, the better they become at expressing their own ideas in writing. This underscores one of the key conclusions in research on poor reading culture among students which negatively impacts their vocabulary acquisition, syntactic knowledge, and ability to structure ideas, all of which are essential for coherent and purposeful writing.

The theory also informs the study's emphasis on student-centred and meaning-driven instruction. Strategies such as using model texts, encouraging extensive reading, implementing writing workshops, and providing formative feedback are aligned with the transactional approach. These methods promote students' active engagement with texts and foster their ability to construct meaning through writing. For instance, when students are given opportunities to read diverse genres and respond to them reflectively, they begin to internalize text structures, stylistic choices, and language patterns that they can later reproduce in their own compositions. Similarly, peer feedback and collaborative writing activities allow students to view writing as a communicative act, not just a classroom exercise, reinforcing the transactional nature of literacy development.

Rosenblatt's differentiation between efferent and aesthetic stances in reading has implications for writing instruction. Efferent stance focuses on extracting information to support academic and expository writing, while the aesthetic stance, which

accentuates personal engagement and emotional response, nurtures expressive and creative writing. A balanced writing curriculum should develop students' ability to operate from both stances, enabling them to write not only to inform but also to express. Unfortunately, many writing tasks in the Ghanaian basic school system are limited to formal academic exercises, with little room for creative or personal writing. This restricts students' ability to see writing as a meaningful and relevant activity, reducing their motivation and engagement.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory offers a robust foundation for comprehension the interconnected nature of reading and writing in language development. It also highlights the importance of learner engagement, contextual relevance, and dialogic interaction in teaching English composition. Applying this theory to the Central Tongu District enables this study to advocate for pedagogical reforms that move beyond rote grammar instruction and isolated writing drills to more holistic, interactive, and reading-informed writing practices that can ultimately enhance students' proficiency and confidence in English composition.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

This segment presents a analysis of vital concepts central to the study of English composition writing proficiency among students. The review explores the underlying components of writing proficiency, the factors influencing students' writing performance, and the pedagogical methods employed by teachers in developing students' writing skills. Emphasis is placed on the interrelated nature of linguistic, instructional, socio-economic, school-based, and learner-specific factors, and how they collectively shape students' capacity to write effectively in English. The segment also examines strategies for improving writing outcomes, aligning each concept with

relevant empirical evidence and theoretical insights to establish a strong foundation for the study.

### **2.2.1 Performance in English Language Composition Writing**

Four (4) essential skills encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing are required to learn and teach English as a second language. However, the second language learners find writing the most difficult of all skills to learn in their process (Sermsook et al, 2017). Written communication skills are at the center of education whether in academic life, workplace, or everyday life because they have firm edge in a world where people have to learn repeatedly new facts (Duignan, 2012). Writing is quite important in our educational and everyday life because it makes information retrievable and permanent in that, written work can be read and re-read over time.

Writing is a way of producing ideas and the development of the linguistic system through its use on the communicative targets in an interactive model (Elashri, 2013). Writing is a powerful way of communicating ideas from a speaker to an addressee through a text. This flow of information becomes a strong catalyst for motivating and enhancing language skill learning. Writing is one of language skills through which a student can think logically and creatively when responding to academic discipline. Writing is a lifelong process and a part of self-advance whose usefulness transcends the classroom (Sermsook et al, 2017). A good writer should possess clear and systematic thoughts to progress ideas logically. Writing entails several processes, including planning, drafting, revising, editing and publication. But in writing, students will typically submit their first draft of writing as the final product (Hoogeveen & van Gelderen, 2013).

They do not create several drafts of their essays. English is referenced as a global language spoken by over 1.5 billion individuals in the world (Pugazhenth, 2012). English in Ghana is a school medium of instruction from primary school, class four to the universities (GES, 2010). It is also used as a state language. English is also examinable and compulsory as a subject at both Ghana primary and secondary schools. The English course books and curriculum have been authored to include the four basic language skills. Attention is placed on oral and written communication as embodied in the objectives of English Language Teaching (ELT) at secondary school level as set out by the secondary English syllabus (GES, 2005). At the end of the secondary school course, students should be competent to utilize a variety of sentence patterns and vocabulary appropriately, be able to communicate effectively in functional and creative writing and reason creatively and critically. The Ghana Ministry of Education mandates that English be taught through the integrated approach. This involves the teaching of English language and English literature as a single subject in the school syllabus under the English language. The integration is meant to enhance and enrich each entity. The students, through exposure to literature, are meant to improve their proficiency in the language. They are also meant to improve their vocabulary skills as well as learn how to manipulate the language in various manners. Similarly, the better understanding of the language should make the learners appreciate literary text more. Integrative approach also suggests that none of the language skills must be learned in isolation. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills must complement each other. Teaching language structure in isolation is not only boring but also leads to communicatively incompetent learners as suggested by MoE (2012). The learner's ability to write in the correct format and style is tested through functional writing. Additionally, the creativity and imagination of the learner

are also examined with creative writing wherein he is asked to write a story as instructed. Additionally, the student is also requested to write essays from set texts. That is where literally skills are examined in writing.

The student must have proper command of the set text in order to give the right content. Thus, the integrated approach mirrors what Richards and Rodgers (2001) describe as the whole language approach. All the language skills in English: listening, speaking, reading and writing must be incorporated in teaching and learning. English has been identified with power, prestige, progress, success and achievement. However, despite the fact that it has been accorded a prestigious status, the students still encounter difficulties in learning it and writing it. Therefore, the learning of English is critical to acceptable performance in exams and communication in official cycles. Not so with Ghanaian secondary school leavers. The GES Report (2017) is concerned about the poor performance in the English subject by secondary schools over the years.

The report identifies a concerning trend that needs to be arrested. Poor teaching and a lack of writing practice have been blamed on poor performance in writing skill (GES, 2017). This can only imply that teachers do not cover all the aspects of composition writing and do not give students enough practice in writing. Teachers need to embrace interactive approaches to teach composition writing and stimulate the thought and creative vigor of learners. Meanwhile, despite sound pedagogy, we need a sophisticated feedback mechanism that will inform us where the problem is at formative stages of learning and not at the summative stage. This will give an indication to intervention processes that will calm the situation and result in better performance.

Writing is a skill where the students have to properly plan and organize their creativity in a linear order to meet the writing purpose. Instruction and teaching of composition and writing are more difficult compared to other language skills' practice and teaching (Akinwamide, 2012).

Previous research has established that writing is an extremely complex cognitive process where the writer is required to demonstrate mastery over a number of variables simultaneously. By implication, this means that the writer has to manage the content, structure, sentence syntax, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and idea creation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2013). All physically and mentally normal human beings learn to speak a language. However, everyone has to be taught the art of writing (Aitchison, 2012).

Therefore, learning and teaching to write should be organized and accomplished through a collaborative effort of the language teacher and hard work of the students. The technicality of the composition and need to use composition to convey an idea by a writer in a logical and coherent manner require it to be taught (Fortun, 2010). The remaining language macro-skills are taught without having major issues regarding how to plan ideas, thoughts and mechanics use because it is required in writing skill.

More effective plans should be designed by the teacher so that the writing class will not be a frustration for the students as well as for the teachers. The students are confronted with what written English conventions demand that they write at a level of grammatical correctness and rhetorical structure far higher and therefore if not cautious, get confused and exhausted about writing composition. That is why the teacher needs to decide what approach he should adopt so as to engage the students. The first of the commonly used methods of writing instruction is the classical

product-based method, or "Models Approach". It is based on the product - the text being written as the model for the learner. The thought was that if a model text written by a good and experienced writer is given to students to read, then the students learn everything that is good about writing and become good writers.

This practice deals with exposing the students to written sentences and paragraphs whether grammatical functions or rhetorical patterns are the issue. The product theorists believe that one can be taught to write without a significant mistake if they are first exposed to a good writer's work before writing (Oguta, 2015). Eslami (2014) interprets the product approach in a linear fashion. The central purpose of this approach is to obtain an error-free coherent text. The students are given writing assignments that would integrate language structure that they had learned through imitating and manipulating grammatical structures. Examples of these writings include those in controlled compositions where the students are given a paragraph and asked to carry out substitution, expansion or completion exercises. The second is known as the process-oriented approach. Process writing, as Coutts, (2015) explains it, has five steps: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Pre-writing is the phase where planning and idea gathering is done. Drafting is writing time devoted to a rough draft. Revising is an activity of improving the draft by reading through it and making changes to the writing based on feedback given. Editing involves the correction of mechanical errors. Publishing is the final step or product. Odima (2015) conducted a study on process approach application in teaching writing skill and observed that teaching writing is problematic to most teachers. They used inefficient methods and a vast majority of them were teaching the students how to write by lecturing. Teachers simply gave students topics and asked them to write compositions. A second group of studies have observed that English composition writing requires

one to be in control of the rules of grammar that can be achieved through the learning process (Söllwander, 2016; Jerotich, 2017). Besides that, for the overall objective of English teaching to be achieved, students should not only gain correct use of major grammatical components like sentences, clauses, phrases and words, but also gain the ability to write sensibly and logically.

More studies also confirm that the skilled writer must be constantly aware of word pattern and word shape patterns, demonstrate firm control of sentence structure and preserve coherence within and between sentences as a means of imposing meaning on text (Odima, 2015). Moreover, it is known that, feedback prevents the students from treating what they are writing as a product and allows them to write multiple drafts and revise multiple times in a bid to develop a much better piece of writing. Feedback can be introduced and exercised in a teaching environment where rewriting is supported (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Tootkaboni and Khatib (2014) explained that through the teacher's corrective feedback in writing class, the student can understand what he has been doing wrong, learn from them, and his writing skill precisely would be developed. Temmerman (2017) states that, without feedback, students will become discouraged and have no idea any more how they are doing or where they need to attempt to improve their writing.

Lee (2008) argues that their actions will be misdirected and they will have an erroneous view of how they are fairing in writing ability. Furthermore, Eisner (2017) argues that lack of feedback also makes the learners believe that they have communicated their meaning and therefore do not need to re-iterate the content of what they have written. Feedback is an essential component of writing.

The secondary teachers will be more expert teachers of functional writing and set text-based essays that they will not prioritize creative writing as much because they feel that the student has learned enough about this skill at primary level. Hayland (2015) discovers that teacher correction of student composition errors serves as models for writers in practice; most of the students do not learn a great deal from corrections since the students' regard hand-in work as completed products rather than a step in the process of completion or betterment. Several studies have also been on the practices used by teachers towards the eradication of the cancer of poor English writing performance. Text-based writing instruction research has been criticized as ineffective due to the lack of diversity in the texts that have been exposed to the teachers. There was also the problem of the high ratio of students to a teacher (Onchera & Manyasi, 2013).

Further studies have revealed that student teachers are not well prepared to handle the teaching of writing skills at secondary school level efficiently. More research has determined that student teachers have limited strategies while writing essays (Manyasi, 2013). Most common methods used within Kenyan schools for teaching composition writing are: discussion, repetition, guided writing and collaborative teaching (Ogada et al, 2012). These have been applied at the high school level without any notable impact on performance. There is a necessity to implement forms of strategies for teaching composition writing with the aim of reversing the observed trends in performance.

### **2.2.3. Factors contributing to of Low Proficiency in English Composition Writing**

Writing in English as a second language remains a persistent challenge for many students in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana. Scholars have attributed this low

proficiency in composition writing to a wide range of interrelated linguistic, instructional, socio-economic, institutional, and learner-based factors (Yildiz & Çetinkaya, 2017; Owu-Ewie, 2006). This section explores the major categories of causes as documented in relevant literature.

### **2.2.3.1 Linguistic Challenges**

Linguistic challenges remain the most immediate and visible obstacles to effective composition writing among Junior High School (J.H.S.) students in Ghana. Students often face difficulties in mastering the core components of language grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure leading to incoherent and poorly structured writing. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) notes that students struggle to express themselves in clear and correct English, which undermines the overall quality of their written compositions. The Chief Examiners' Reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in 2018 and 2019 highlighted these concerns, citing widespread mechanical errors such as poor spelling, incorrect punctuation, inconsistent verb tenses, and faulty subject-verb agreement. These errors resulted in compositions that lacked clarity, cohesion, and relevance to the assigned topics.

A significant cause of these issues is students' limited vocabulary. According to Nation (2013), a rich vocabulary is essential for precise and meaningful communication; yet, most students tend to rely on repetitive or vague word choices, making their writing monotonous and unclear. Furthermore, students often misapply complex vocabulary or coin inappropriate expressions due to a lack of contextual understanding. Grammar poses an additional hurdle. Hyland (2003) explains that second-language learners often find it challenging to internalize syntactic rules, leading to fragmented sentences, misused verb forms, and poor paragraph

organization. These linguistic deficiencies are often compounded by the fact that English is not the mother tongue for most students. In districts such as Central Tongu, where the local dialect dominates social and home interactions, learners are exposed to limited authentic English use outside the classroom, reducing their chances of acquiring the language naturally.

### **2.2.3.2 Socio-Economic and Environmental Factors**

Socio-economic and environmental conditions play a crucial role in shaping students' language proficiency. In many rural areas such as Central Tongu, poverty is a significant barrier to academic success. Students from low-income households often lack access to basic educational resources like textbooks, storybooks, and writing materials, which are essential for developing writing skills (UNESCO, 2015). The home environment is another critical factor. In homes where English is neither spoken nor encouraged, and where parents may be illiterate or disengaged from their children's education, students are deprived of meaningful language support outside the classroom (Pretorius & Spaul, 2016).

Additionally, children who are burdened with household responsibilities or are involved in subsistence farming or petty trading may have limited time and energy for academic work, particularly time-intensive tasks such as writing. Epstein (2010) emphasizes that parental involvement in a child's academic life has a strong influence on motivation and performance. Unfortunately, in many low-income communities, such involvement is minimal or absent due to socio-economic pressures. Furthermore, students in such contexts may experience hunger, stress, or poor health conditions that detract from their ability to concentrate and engage meaningfully in composition writing.

Socio-economic status (SES) significantly shapes students' language development and writing competence. In low-income communities, children are frequently deprived of stimulating language environments, books, reading materials, or even quiet spaces for study (UNESCO, 2015; Pretorius & Spaul, 2016). This deprivation affects early language development and continues to influence academic outcomes well into adolescence. For students in Central Tongu, where poverty levels are high and parental literacy is low, opportunities for language interaction and guided support at home are minimal. Epstein (2010) notes that parental involvement in school activities and at-home learning significantly predicts academic achievement, particularly in language-related domains.

Environmental factors such as multilingual households, the dominance of indigenous languages (e.g., Ewe), and a general lack of English-language media also play a role in reducing exposure to standard written English. This contributes to fossilization of errors and inhibits the development of academic register needed for school writing (Owu-Ewie, 2006). In addition, daily stressors linked to poverty, such as food insecurity, frequent absenteeism, and household responsibilities diminish cognitive resources that could otherwise be devoted to learning (Kim et al., 2021).

### **2.2.3.3 Instructional Factors**

The instructional methods employed by teachers have a significant impact on students' writing proficiency. Adeyemi (2010) and Uysal & Banoglu (2018) assert that the effectiveness of writing instruction is often compromised when teachers lack adequate qualifications or training. In many rural and underserved districts in Ghana, such as Central Tongu, it is common to find teachers who are either teaching outside their area of expertise or lack specialized training in English language instruction. This often results in a reliance on outdated or ineffective teaching methods. Ampofo

and Owu-Ewie (2017) observe that many English teachers in Ghana focus heavily on grammar drills and rote memorization at the expense of higher-order writing skills such as content development, logical sequencing, and creative expression.

The lack of differentiated instruction to cater to students' diverse learning needs further exacerbates the problem. Hyland (2003) notes that good writing pedagogy should emphasize process-oriented approaches that include pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. However, many teachers in J.H.S. classrooms skip these stages and simply assign writing tasks without guidance or feedback. Without timely and constructive feedback, students are unable to identify and correct their mistakes, thus repeating them in subsequent writing tasks. The absence of writing models, peer review, and collaborative writing activities also limits students' exposure to diverse writing styles and strategies.

The role of teachers and instructional methodology is pivotal in determining the extent to which students develop writing competence. In many public basic schools in Ghana, teachers often lack the requisite pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to teach composition effectively (Ampofo & Owu-Ewie, 2017; Adeyemi, 2010). Rather than engaging students in process writing; including brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing teachers often emphasize rote memorization, sentence completion exercises, and grammar translation approaches. As Hyland (2003) emphasizes, meaningful writing instruction requires scaffolding, modeling, and continuous feedback, all of which are largely absent in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms.

Further, teachers' own anxieties about their writing abilities or their limited training in contemporary composition pedagogies often lead them to avoid assigning writing

tasks or to focus solely on grammar drills (Uysal & Banoglu, 2018). This deprives students of the opportunity to develop fluency and confidence in writing. According to Ferris (2006), without iterative feedback, students are likely to repeat errors and remain unaware of their communicative deficiencies. This instructional neglect reinforces the proficiency gap and entrenches student disengagement.

#### **2.2.3.4 School-Related Factors**

Beyond the classroom, school-wide constraints significantly hinder writing development. One major issue is large class sizes, which are common in many public schools in Ghana. According to Mulkeen et al. (2007), overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention or assess writing thoroughly. Teachers may not have the time to read and comment on each student's work, reducing the chances for personalized feedback and improvement. Another critical constraint is the inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials. Many schools lack access to textbooks, writing guides, dictionaries, and other instructional resources that support composition writing. This deprives students of examples and reference materials necessary for learning the conventions of academic writing.

Time allocation is another overlooked but essential factor. Acheaw (2015) argues that the current structure of the school timetable often gives limited attention to composition writing. Teachers may dedicate more time to grammar, comprehension, or literature sections perceived to be easier to score on in examinations while neglecting the complex and time-consuming task of teaching writing. This marginalization of composition writing leads to inadequate practice and poor mastery.

School-level constraints play a facilitative or inhibitory role in language acquisition. In many rural Ghanaian schools, including those in Central Tongu, overcrowded

classrooms sometimes exceeding 60 students make it nearly impossible for teachers to assess writing tasks thoroughly or provide individualized feedback (Mulkeen et al., 2007). In such contexts, writing is often minimized or replaced by multiple-choice exercises, which are easier to grade but do not develop productive language skills.

Additionally, the absence of English composition textbooks, writing samples, dictionaries, and teacher guides results in a narrowed curriculum focused on exam preparation rather than skill development (Acheaw, 2015). School libraries, where they exist, are often understocked, and English clubs or reading initiatives are rare. These deficits affect both the frequency and quality of writing instruction, thus impeding the development of writing proficiency. Without sufficient models and structured writing activities, students lack the inputs necessary to imitate, practice, and internalize good writing (Topçu, Erbilgin, & Arikan, 2016).

#### **2.2.3.5 Student-Related Factors**

Students' personal characteristics and attitudes also contribute significantly to their writing difficulties. Bruning and Horn (2000) emphasize that motivation is a key predictor of writing success. However, many students display low self-efficacy and confidence in their writing abilities, often due to repeated failures or lack of encouragement. Fear of making mistakes, embarrassment over poor grammar, and a general disinterest in writing tasks all contribute to low levels of engagement. Some students may also suffer from specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dysgraphia, which are often undiagnosed and unsupported in basic school settings.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) suggest that students need intrinsic motivation, clear goals, and metacognitive strategies to succeed in writing. Yet, the absence of a writing culture both at school and home deprives students of regular practice. Limited access

to reading materials and writing opportunities also restrict their vocabulary development and exposure to diverse writing structures. Without scaffolding, role models, or a system of rewards for writing, many learners develop a negative attitude toward writing activities, thereby reinforcing the cycle of poor performance.

Among all causes, linguistic competence exerts the most direct and observable influence on writing performance. Poor command of grammar, limited vocabulary, incorrect spelling, and misused punctuation significantly reduce students' ability to produce coherent and structured texts (Hyland, 2003; Nation, 2013). According to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners' Reports (2018, 2019), grammatical flaws, shallow content, and lexical inaccuracy are consistent features in student scripts across Ghana. These issues are not isolated technical lapses but symptomatic of deeper gaps in language acquisition, aggravated by insufficient exposure to the language both in and outside the classroom (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

Furthermore, the cognitive demand of English composition requires internalization of syntax, cohesive devices, and genre conventions all of which are built on a solid base of linguistic exposure and practice. The fact that English is a second language for most students in Central Tongu further compounds this challenge. Studies by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) reveal that students with weak linguistic foundations are less likely to understand the rhetorical expectations of writing tasks, often leading to disorganized and underdeveloped essays.

Student-level attributes including motivation, self-efficacy, cognitive ability, and past learning experiences contribute significantly to the depth of writing challenges. Writing requires not only linguistic proficiency but also higher-order thinking skills such as organization, evaluation, synthesis, and creativity (Zimmerman & Schunk,

2011). Many students in the Central Tongu District exhibit low confidence and high anxiety when faced with composition tasks. This results in avoidance behaviours, minimal effort, and disengagement from writing assignments.

Moreover, learning difficulties such as dysgraphia, attention deficits, or language processing disorders often go undiagnosed and untreated in public schools, especially in rural settings. These students are likely to struggle significantly more and yet receive little or no differentiated support. Bruning and Horn (2000) argue that writing is particularly vulnerable to the effects of self-perception and motivation. Students who view themselves as poor writers often internalize failure, creating a vicious cycle of underachievement.

The extent to which various factors contribute to low writing proficiency among J.H.S. students in Central Tongu is both significant and multifaceted. Linguistic challenges constitute the most immediate barriers to effective writing, but these are rooted in socio-economic deprivation, weak instructional practices, under-resourced schools, and student-level dispositions. Each of these factors reinforces the others, creating a systemic problem that requires a holistic response.

#### **2.2.4 Contributions of the Causes to Low Writing Proficiency**

Understanding the extent to which various causes contribute to low writing proficiency among Junior High School (J.H.S.) students is pivotal for designing interventions that are both targeted and effective. As outlined earlier, these factors are not independent; rather, they exist within a dynamic, interconnected educational ecosystem where the presence or absence of one influence the impact of others. In rural and semi-urban contexts such as the Central Tongu District, these contributing factors; linguistic, socio-economic, instructional, school-related, and individual

learner factors often converge to produce a deep-rooted crisis in students' English composition skills.

#### **2.2.4.1 Linguistic Competence as a Core Determinant**

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#### **2.2.4.2 Socio-Economic and Environmental Pressures**

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affects early language development and continues to influence academic outcomes well into adolescence. For students in Central Tongu, where poverty levels are high and parental literacy is low, opportunities for language interaction and guided support at home are minimal. Epstein (2010) notes that parental involvement in school activities and at-home learning significantly predicts academic achievement, particularly in language-related domains.

Environmental factors such as multilingual households, the dominance of indigenous languages (e.g., Ewe), and a general lack of English-language media also play a role in reducing exposure to standard written English. This contributes to fossilization of errors and inhibits the development of academic register needed for school writing (Owu-Ewie, 2006). In addition, daily stressors linked to poverty, such as food insecurity, frequent absenteeism, and household responsibilities diminish cognitive resources that could otherwise be devoted to learning (Kim et al., 2021).

#### **2.2.4.3 Instructional Practices and Pedagogical Limitations**

The role of teachers and instructional methodology is pivotal in ascertaining the level to which learners develop writing competence. In many public basic schools in Ghana, teachers often lack the requisite pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to teach composition effectively (Ampofo & Owu-Ewie, 2017; Adeyemi, 2010). Rather than engaging students in process writing; including brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing teachers often emphasize rote memorization, sentence completion exercises, and grammar translation approaches. As Hyland (2003) emphasizes, meaningful writing instruction requires scaffolding, modeling, and continuous feedback, all of which are largely absent in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms.

Further, teachers' own anxieties about their writing abilities or their limited training in contemporary composition pedagogies often lead them to avoid assigning writing tasks or to focus solely on grammar drills (Uysal & Banoglu, 2018). This deprives students of the chance to progress in fluency and writing with confidence. According to Ferris (2006), without iterative feedback, students are likely to repeat errors and remain unaware of their communicative deficiencies. This instructional neglect reinforces the proficiency gap and entrenches student disengagement.

#### **2.2.4.4 School Infrastructure and Institutional Factors**

School-level constraints play a facilitative or inhibitory role in language acquisition. In many rural Ghanaian schools, including those in Central Tongu, overcrowded classrooms sometimes exceeding 60 students make it nearly impossible for teachers to assess writing tasks thoroughly or provide individualized feedback (Mulkeen et al., 2007). In such contexts, writing is often minimized or replaced by multiple-choice exercises, which are easier to grade but do not develop productive language skills.

Additionally, the absence of English composition textbooks, writing samples, dictionaries, and teacher guides results in a narrowed curriculum focused on exam preparation rather than skill development (Acheaw, 2015). School libraries, where they exist, are often understocked, and English clubs or reading initiatives are rare. These deficits affect both the frequency and quality of writing instruction, thus impeding the development of writing proficiency. Without sufficient models and structured writing activities, students lack the inputs necessary to imitate, practice, and internalize good writing (Topçu, Erbilgin, & Arıkan, 2016).

#### **2.2.4.5 Student Disposition, Motivation, and Cognitive Constraints**

Student-level attributes including motivation, self-efficacy, cognitive ability, and past learning experiences contribute significantly to the depth of writing challenges. Writing requires not only linguistic proficiency but also analytical rational skills such as organization, evaluation, synthesis, and creativity (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). Many students in the Central Tongu District exhibit low confidence and high anxiety when faced with composition tasks. This results in avoidance behaviours, minimal effort, and disengagement from writing assignments.

Moreover, learning difficulties such as dysgraphia, attention deficits, or language processing disorders often go undiagnosed and untreated in public schools, especially in rural settings. These students are likely to struggle significantly more and yet receive little or no differentiated support. Bruning and Horn (2000) argue that writing is particularly vulnerable to the effects of self-perception and motivation. Students who view themselves as poor writers often internalize failure, creating a vicious cycle of underachievement.

The extent to which various factors contribute to low writing proficiency among J.H.S. students in Central Tongu is both significant and multifaceted. Linguistic challenges constitute the most immediate barriers to effective writing, but these are rooted in socio-economic deprivation, weak instructional practices, under-resourced schools, and student-level dispositions. Each of these factors reinforces the others, creating a systemic problem that requires a holistic response.

#### **2.2.5 Methods Used by Teachers in Teaching English Composition**

Effective teaching methods are crucial in developing students' writing proficiency, especially in the context of Junior High Schools (J.H.S.) in Ghana. Various

instructional strategies have been identified in the literature, each offering distinct advantages and limitations. In this section, the major methods used by teachers in teaching English composition are reviewed in detail.

### **2.2.5.1 Product-Oriented Approach**

The product-oriented approach is most common traditional and widely used methods in English composition instruction, especially in examination-focused systems like Ghana's. In this method, teachers focus primarily on the final written product, assessing students' compositions based on grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and adherence to prescribed formats. This approach emphasizes correctness and completeness rather than creativity or the thought processes involved in writing. According to Hyland (2003), while this method helps in evaluating students' command of language mechanics, it does little to nurture their critical thinking and communicative competence. Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) also note that this approach encourages memorization and formulaic writing, often discouraging learners from engaging deeply with their ideas. In Ghanaian J.H.S. classrooms, particularly in rural areas like Central Tongu, this method is predominant due to large class sizes, time constraints, and the pressure to prepare students for standardized examinations. However, its overreliance has been linked to surface-level learning and limited improvement in students' actual writing abilities.

In the product model, the instruction is observed to start from the point of view that a particular form of writing, say a fictional newspaper essay is applicable to every student. In tandem with this model, the instructional concentration is on learner' completed products. The different characteristics of an essay composition are explained in broadly as introduction, body and conclusion. No mention is made that

different kinds of writing are required for different contexts (Williams, 1998). The product- approach puts the tutor central to classroom activity. The product approach limitation in the research/practice context is an assumption that students can write competently from teachers' editing marks on pieces of paper (Mansfield, 1993). It is also significant to note that the product approach is given importance in a Ghanaian classroom. It is correctly described "the product-oriented classroom, fails to introduce pupils to collaborative writing and concentrates on literature and reading, not on writing" (Williams, 1998, p. 47). As such, Andres (1993) advises that the instructors would need to develop a curriculum such that the students can express their ideas and feelings in a product-oriented class.

#### **2.3.5.2 Process-Oriented Approach**

The process-oriented approach treats writing as a recursive, multi-stage activity. It emphasizes brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. This method encourages learners to see writing as a process of discovery cum reflection. According to Graham and Perin (2007), students who receive systematic instruction in the writing process show marked improvement in their writing quality, creativity, and organization. The process approach allows students to plan and structure their thoughts more effectively, providing them with opportunities to refine their work through feedback and revision. However, in the Ghanaian context, especially in under-resourced areas like Central Tongu, implementing this method poses challenges. Teachers often face time constraints and high pupil-teacher ratios, which limit their ability to guide students through the full writing cycle. Moreover, many teachers are not adequately trained in facilitating writing as a process and may lack the pedagogical knowledge to provide formative feedback at each stage. Ampofo and

Owu-Ewie (2017) argue that professional growth and systemic support are essential for the efficacious adoption of this approach.

The process approach guides learners through the different steps of writing. Graves (1994, p. 80) calls it a smooth, cyclical routine whereby writers select ideas, put their thoughts onto paper, and subsequently read over their writing, going through these steps as required. This process recognizes that writing is not merely the output but a thoughtful process of meaning construction. Teachers who use this method consider students as actual writers and place worth on their texts as meaningful representations of their thinking (Bunting, 1998). Instead of concentrating on the end product in isolation, the process approach highlights the actions they undertake to achieve it. The process approach dwells on writing activities that help learners progress from information gathering and brainstorming to producing and delivering a completed text (Tribble, 1996). Likewise, the process approach understands writing as a 'complex, recursive and creative process and learning to write involves learning an effective composing process' (Silva & Matsuda, 2002, p. 261). The learners work in groups and the groups are working teams. Peer or collaborative writing encourages students to consider everything that is entailed in writing (Graves, 1983). The teacher acts as a facilitator (Elbow & Belanoff, 2000). He/she also develops the writing abilities of the students by showing them how the content, organization and vocabulary of writing can be improved (Browne, 1993, p. 36). Teachers should write for themselves regularly so that they may understand how the process of writing the students undertake (Graves, 1983). In addition, the writing process is built on form, purpose and audience. The audience of the learners might be classmates and instructor; he must know his audience's pre-knowledge and expectation because these will determine what he is to write. If the audience are less informed than the writer, the

writer is in the position of a teacher, if the audience are more informed than the writer, the writer's position is to demonstrate awareness, proficiency, and intelligence. The author is as well responsible for ensuring the communication is presented in a right style (Bratcher, 1997).

### **2.2.5.3 Genre-Based Approach**

The genre-based approach involves assisting students to write within specific text types viz narrative essay, argumentative essay, descriptive and expository essays. This introduces learners to the structures, features, and language conventions characteristic of each genre. Christie and Derewianka (2008) emphasize that genre pedagogy is predominantly useful for second-language students, because it demystifies the writing process and provides students with templates to follow. Students benefit from exposure to model texts, guided analysis, and scaffolded writing activities that help them understand and reproduce academic writing formats. However, despite its pedagogical advantages, the implementation of genre-based teaching in Ghana faces significant barriers. Many schools in the Central Tongu District lack access to exemplar texts, writing guides, or curriculum materials tailored to genre instruction. Furthermore, many teachers are unfamiliar with this method and receive limited professional training on how to blend genre awareness into their lesson plans. As a result, genre-based instruction remains an underutilized approach, even though it holds promise for improving writing. A genre approach is another approach of writing. Kachru (1992) asserts that an imaginative or an innovative use of English language is the use of English language in literary genres. Genre suggests types of writing; it refers to the overall shape and intention of a text as well as the register more concerned with details (Collerson, 1988). To Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992, p. 98), genre is a word which comes from French to Latin 'generare' (beget). Genre is 'defined by Littlefair

(1992, p.10) as a purposeful and communicative activity'. Cowley (2004, p. 79) believes 'by approaching creative writing through genre', interest and motivation of students can be enhanced. Thus, it is appropriate to apply genre approach to a Ghanaian classroom, as genre approach considers how language is utilized for the particular purpose within the particular context (Martin, 1992). The students need to be aware of genre so that they can understand purposes, conventions and strategies to write successfully in different ways because by applying genre as a means of tackling creative writing their interest and motivation can be heightened. (Cowley, 2004, p. 79). Also, genres are socially recognised kinds of text and generic forms need to be instructed overtly in teaching writing (Graves, 1983). It does not, however, ensure the teachers' capability to construct pupils' skill in writing process. It also fails to provide the learners with knowledge about the workings of the language that is able to prevent adequate communication in writing and critical analysis of text (Hasan, 1996). Hence, the genre approach is also limited. It is desirable to point out some other approaches which must be adopted in Ghana for carrying out the innovative and creative roles.g composition skills among J.H.S. students.

#### **2.2.5.4 Collaborative Writing**

Collaborative writing, a student-centred method grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, involves learners working in pairs or small groups to co-construct written texts. This approach emphasizes interaction, peer negotiation, and shared responsibility in the writing process. Storch (2005) asserts that collaborative writing enhances learners' grammatical accuracy, coherence, and overall text quality, as students engage in discussion, correct each other's mistakes, and learn from one another. Yu and Lee (2016) further support the effectiveness of this method in improving fluency and promoting active engagement with language. In practice,

collaborative writing can help students who lack confidence in writing independently and ensure a classroom rapport and dialogue. However, in the Ghanaian context, especially in teeming classrooms, this method is hard to manage. Educators often lack the time or classroom control strategies needed to facilitate meaningful collaboration. In addition, assessment structures in Ghana do not always support group writing activities, leading teachers to prioritize individual compositions.

#### **2.2.5.5 Use of Models and Exemplars**

The adoption of text model and exemplars is a practical strategy where teachers provide students with high-quality writing samples for analysis and imitation. These models help students understand text structure, vocabulary usage, tone, and cohesion in real contexts. Bandura's (1986) social learning theory suggests that learners acquire new skills through observation and modeling, making this method especially effective for novice writers. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) notes that students who regularly engage with sample compositions perform better in writing tasks due to increased familiarity with stylistic and organizational norms. Despite its proven benefits, this method is underused in many Ghanaian classrooms due to the scarcity of appropriate teaching materials and sample texts. Teachers in the Central Tongu District, for example, often rely on outdated textbooks or personally written examples, which may not cover a wide range of genres or proficiency levels. Without access to diverse and relevant exemplars, students have fewer opportunities to model their writing after proficient writers.

#### **2.2.5.6 Grammar and Vocabulary Instruction**

Explicit instruction in grammar and vocabulary is another core component of writing instruction. When integrated effectively into writing tasks, this method helps students

improve sentence construction, word choice, and clarity. Nation (2013) advocates for teaching both high-frequency and academic vocabulary to support writing across disciplines. Ur (1996) argues that grammar instruction should be contextualized within meaningful communication rather than taught in isolation. However, many Ghanaian teachers continue to emphasize rote memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary lists without adequate contextual practice. This traditional approach, while helpful for exam preparation, does little to enhance students' ability to use language creatively and effectively in composition writing. The integration of grammar and vocabulary teaching into writing instruction remains inconsistent, particularly in schools with limited resources or inadequate teacher training.

#### **2.2.5.7 Technology-Enhanced Writing Instruction**

Technology-enhanced instruction involves the use of digital tools like word processors, syntax checkers, educational software, and online writing podiums to assist in writing development. Warschauer (2010) highlights the potential of technology to provide immediate feedback, increase student motivation, and support revision. Tools like Microsoft Word, Grammarly, or Google Docs can help students identify errors, expand their vocabulary, and collaborate with peers. Regrettably, technology-enhanced writing instruction faces major obstacles in many Ghanaian regions, including Central Tongu. As Kafyulilo et al. (2015) highlight, inadequate infrastructure, erratic electricity supply, scarce internet connectivity, and insufficient teacher training in ICT impede the adoption of digital tools in classrooms. As a result, the potential of technology to support writing development remains largely untapped in rural educational settings.

## **2.2.6 Strategies for Improving Students' English Composition Writing**

Improving students' English composition skills requires deliberate and multifaceted strategies involving both classroom-based interventions and broader systemic support. The literature identifies several practical, evidence-based approaches that can enhance students' writing performance when effectively implemented.

### **2.2.6.1 Providing Targeted and Formative Feedback**

Formative feedback has been empirically shown to improve students' writing quality when it goes beyond surface-level correction to address idea development, organisation, and language use. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) found that students who received individualized, criterion-referenced feedback made significantly greater gains in rewrite quality than those who only received summative scores, indicating that structured feedback helps writers internalise standards of good writing. Sadler (1989) similarly demonstrated that effective feedback helps learners understand the gap between current and desired performance, which in turn improves revision accuracy and self-monitoring skills. In contexts with large classes, studies show that structured peer review can supplement teacher feedback: Hyland and Hyland (2006) reported that peer feedback, when guided by clear criteria, produced measurable gains in students' revision of drafts. These findings confirm that targeted feedback whether teacher-generated or peer-supported enhances students' revision processes, helps them recognise specific writing challenges, and leads to higher quality compositions.

### **2.2.6.2 Enhancing Teacher Professional Development**

There is strong empirical support that professional development focused on writing pedagogy improves teacher practices and student outcomes. Uysal and Banoglu (2018) found that teachers who participated in targeted training on writing instruction reported increased use of process-oriented strategies and saw corresponding

improvements in students' writing scores. Similarly, Graham et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis showing that professional development on specific writing strategies such as explicit instruction in planning, drafting, and revision was associated with significant increases in students' writing performance compared to teachers who did not receive such training. In the Ghanaian context, Adeyemi (2010) documented that teachers exposed to INSET workshops on communicative writing strategies shifted away from repetitive grammar drills toward guided writing tasks, leading to improved classroom engagement and more coherent student texts. These studies demonstrate that sustained, pedagogically focused training equips teachers with techniques that foster more effective writing instruction, directly contributing to better student outcomes.

### **2.2.6.3 Encouraging Extensive Reading**

The positive relationship between reading and writing development is well established in empirical research. Krashen (2004) found that extensive reading contributes to natural acquisition of vocabulary and language structures, which subsequently enhances students' writing fluency and complexity. This relationship has been confirmed in school contexts: Mason and Krashen (2013) reported that students with regular independent reading practice produced longer, more lexically diverse compositions than peers with limited reading habits. In Ghana, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) showed that students who participated in sustained school reading programmes demonstrated significantly higher scores on writing assessments compared to those who did not, with improvements observed in both vocabulary range and organisational coherence. These studies indicate that extensive reading enlarges learners' linguistic resources and provides them with models of varied genres, which students can emulate in their writing.

#### **2.2.6.4 Implementing Writing Workshops**

Writing workshops, which emphasise the processes of planning, drafting, revision, and publication, have been empirically validated as effective for improving student writing. Calkins (1994) describes how workshops structure instruction around mini-lessons, peer conferences, and iterative drafting, all of which build students' writing proficiency. Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a synthesis of research and found that workshop-related practices such as guided revision, peer conferencing, and reflective assessment were consistently linked to improvements in writing quality across grades. These studies show that when students engage actively in the writing process, receive timely support, and participate in structured reflection, their ability to organise ideas and control language improves. Writing workshops have been successfully implemented even in resource-limited settings by adapting materials and scheduling dedicated writing time, suggesting practical applicability in contexts like Central Tongu.

#### **2.2.6.5 Integrating Technology in Writing Instruction**

Empirical evidence supports the integration of technology as a tool for improving writing instruction. Warschauer (2010) found that students using digital writing environments, such as word processors and online collaborative platforms, produced longer texts with fewer surface errors compared to those writing by hand, partly due to ease of editing and revision. Additionally, Graham, Harris, and Hebert (2011) reviewed studies showing that technology-supported instruction such as word processing combined with strategy instruction increased both motivation and writing quality for students across diverse contexts. Digital tools that provide automated grammar and spell checking, when paired with teacher guidance, also help learners identify patterns of errors and correct them independently. Even in contexts with

limited ICT infrastructure, researchers have documented positive impacts from the use of mobile phones and multimedia tools for drafting and peer interaction (Thomas & Parks, 2014). These findings suggest that technology, when accessible and thoughtfully integrated, can enhance students' ability to plan, revise, and refine texts.

#### **2.2.6.6 Peer Review and Collaborative Writing**

Research supports peer review and collaborative writing as effective strategies for enhancing writing proficiency. Storch (2005) found that students engaged in collaborative writing tasks demonstrated improved negotiation of meaning and metalinguistic awareness, leading to more accurate and coherent texts. Peer review studies, such as those synthesised by Van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot (2006), indicate that structured peer feedback not casual comments can significantly improve revision quality and writers' awareness of audience, organisation, and language use. The scaffolding inherent in these social processes helps students articulate criteria for good writing and refine their own texts accordingly. These effects are especially valuable in large classes where individual teacher feedback is constrained, suggesting that peer mechanisms can effectively supplement teacher efforts without requiring additional resources.

#### **2.2.6.7 Using Model Texts and Scaffolding**

The use of model texts paired with scaffolding has been validated as an effective instructional strategy in writing research. Derewianka and Jones (2016) showed that when students analyse exemplary essays, they develop genre awareness, better understand text structure, and improve their ability to craft coherent introductions, bodies, and conclusions. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development underpins many scaffolded writing interventions, where guided support is gradually withdrawn as competence grows. Research by Graham, Harris, and

Mason (2005) found that scaffolded planning tools such as graphic organisers and sentence frames help students organise ideas and control language structure, leading to measurable improvements in composition quality. These studies confirm that model texts and scaffolded supports function as cognitive tools that bridge learners' current abilities and targeted writing outcomes, making them particularly useful in classrooms where students struggle with organisation and language control.

## **2.3 Empirical Review**

This section presents a detailed empirical review aligned with the study's objectives, highlighting previous findings, contextualizing them for Junior High School students, and identifying research gaps that justify the current study.

### **2.3.1 Causes of Low Proficiency in English Composition**

Mazana et al. (2019) conducted a study examining the predictors of poor English composition among basic school learners and found that limited vocabulary, weak grammar knowledge, and insufficient writing practice were major contributors. The study demonstrated that students who lacked exposure to structured writing activities and who had underdeveloped language skills struggled to produce coherent and meaningful written texts. While the study provided valuable insights into student-level challenges, it focused primarily on urban and semi-urban contexts, leaving unanswered questions about how these factors manifest in rural schools, where exposure to English outside the classroom is even more restricted and resources for practice are scarce.

Michael (2015) explored the role of instructional support in students' writing development and reported that many learners faced difficulties in sentence construction and coherence because of inadequate teacher guidance. The study

emphasized that limited feedback, inconsistent instruction, and the absence of structured writing exercises contributed to poor writing outcomes. Although the study highlighted teacher influence, it did not fully consider contextual constraints such as language background, classroom size, or socio-economic conditions that are common in rural districts like Central Tongu, suggesting a gap in understanding how instructional deficiencies interact with local realities.

Frenzel et al. (2009) and Klusmann et al. (2008) examined teacher-related factors affecting student performance in language tasks and found that teachers' attitudes, low motivation, and classroom emotional climate significantly influenced students' engagement and writing outcomes. Their research highlighted the importance of teacher affect and classroom management in fostering writing proficiency. However, these studies were conducted in developed contexts and focused less on the challenges faced by teachers in resource-constrained environments, such as insufficient instructional materials or heavy workloads typical of rural Ghanaian schools, leaving a knowledge gap regarding their applicability to these settings.

Kitta (2004) and Ponera, Mhonyiwa, and Mrutu (2011) investigated systemic issues in Ghanaian schools that impact English performance, identifying understaffing, lack of qualified teachers, and limited instructional resources as critical barriers. Their findings suggest that institutional factors constrain both teaching quality and student learning. While informative, these studies addressed general English performance and did not focus specifically on composition writing, leaving a gap in understanding how these systemic factors contribute to the specific challenges of written expression among rural Junior High School learners.

Owu-Ewie (2006) examined the effects of bilingual education models on language outcomes in Ghana and highlighted that the early-exit transition model forced students to shift to English instruction before they had sufficient proficiency in their first language. This premature transition limited comprehension and hindered the development of writing skills, particularly in structured composition tasks. While this study identifies a key policy-related factor affecting writing, it does not explore how local cultural, linguistic, and resource contexts in rural districts amplify or mitigate these effects, creating a gap that the current study aims to address.

Collectively, these studies identify important student-, teacher-, and system-level factors influencing English composition proficiency. However, there is limited empirical evidence focusing on rural, resource-constrained districts such as Central Tongu, where linguistic diversity, restricted English exposure, and socio-cultural dynamics may intensify the challenges of writing instruction. The current study seeks to fill this gap by examining the specific causes of low English composition proficiency within this local context, providing insights directly applicable to Junior High School learners in the district.

### **2.3.2 Perceived Effects of Key Factors on JHS Students' Low Proficiency in English Composition Writing**

Uysal and Banoglu (2018) investigated the impact of teacher knowledge and instructional practices on students' writing outcomes and found that poor teacher content knowledge and ineffective instructional methods were significant predictors of low composition scores. Their study quantified the extent to which these variables explained variations in writing performance, showing that teacher-related factors can account for substantial differences in students' abilities to construct coherent essays. While informative, the study was conducted in a context with relatively adequate

resources, and it did not examine how these factors interact with challenges typical of rural, low-resource schools, where teacher capacity and material availability may be more constrained.

In the Ghanaian context, Mazana et al. (2019) quantified how grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and inadequate exposure to English contributed to poor essay performance among basic school learners. Their findings indicated that these student-level factors explained a significant portion of the variance in writing scores, emphasizing that deficiencies in language skills directly reduce composition proficiency. However, the study primarily focused on urban and semi-urban schools, leaving rural learners underrepresented. The extent to which these factors affect students in remote districts, where English is less frequently spoken and resource constraints are more pronounced, remains unclear.

Ponera, Mhonyiwa, and Mrutu (2011) examined systemic influences on English performance in Ghana and reported that learners in schools with limited teaching materials, large class sizes, and insufficient supervision consistently underperformed in written tasks. Their study highlighted how school-level conditions exacerbate students' struggles with composition. Nonetheless, the research did not quantify the relative contribution of individual factors, nor did it explore the combined effects of student, teacher, and school-level variables within a rural setting.

These studies confirm that both student- and teacher-related factors, as well as systemic conditions, influence students' writing performance. However, most research provides broad estimates without context-specific analysis for rural districts like Central Tongu. In such areas, linguistic, socio-economic, and infrastructural constraints likely intensify the effects of these factors. This creates a knowledge gap

regarding the relative contribution of each cause to low English composition proficiency in rural settings, a gap that the present study seeks to fill through focused, contextually grounded investigation.

### **2.3.3 Techniques Used by Teachers to Teach English Composition**

Research has consistently shown that the instructional methods teachers use have a direct impact on students' composition skills. Topçu, Erbilgin, and Arikan (2016) found that process-oriented writing approaches emphasizing drafting, revising, and peer feedback led to significant improvements in students' writing performance compared to traditional product-oriented methods. Their study highlighted that engaging students in iterative writing processes encourages critical thinking, self-reflection, and better organization of ideas, which are essential for developing proficiency in composition.

In the Ghanaian context, Kitta (2004) reported that many English teachers continue to rely on teacher-centred methods, including rote memorization, sentence drills, and copying exercises. While these approaches may reinforce basic language structures, they often fail to develop learners' ability to produce original and coherent texts, limiting creativity and critical thinking in writing. Mazana et al. (2019) demonstrated that when teachers incorporate varied writing prompts, collaborative exercises, and scaffolded tasks, students show higher engagement and improved composition quality. Similarly, Michael (2015) found that explicit grammar instruction combined with guided writing practice strengthened students' sentence construction and overall composition performance.

Despite these insights, most of these studies were conducted in urban or semi-urban schools, where access to teaching materials, exposure to English, and teacher training

levels are generally higher. They do not account for the realities of rural districts such as Central Tongu, where teachers often contend with large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and students whose primary language is not English. This creates a gap in understanding which teaching techniques are most effective under rural conditions, where the socio-cultural and linguistic environment may significantly influence the success of different instructional strategies. The current study addresses this gap by examining the methods used by teachers in Central Tongu to teach composition and evaluating their effectiveness in a rural, resource-constrained setting.

#### **2.3.4 Teachers' Suggestions for Improving English Composition Proficiency**

Empirical research reveals that teachers often identify both pedagogical and contextual strategies as critical for improving students' writing performance. Frenzel et al. (2009) and Klusmann et al. (2008) found that teachers emphasise continuous professional development and smaller class sizes to enable more effective writing instruction. Their work showed that when teachers receive ongoing training and have manageable workloads, they are better able to provide targeted feedback and scaffold students' writing processes, which directly influences learners' composition proficiency. Although informative, these studies were conducted largely in well-resourced contexts, limiting their applicability to rural, under-resourced schools where structural challenges differ substantially.

In Ghana, Kitta (2004) highlighted that English teachers recommend increased access to textbooks, writing materials, and instructional aids as foundational to improving writing performance. Kitta's study reported that a lack of basic teaching resources constrained teachers' ability to implement varied writing activities, forcing reliance on traditional methods that do not support deeper writing development. Building on

this, Mazana et al. (2019) found that teachers suggested differentiated instructional strategies such as tiered writing tasks and scaffolded assignments to address learners' varied proficiency levels. Their study also noted that opportunities for extended reading and writing practice both within and outside the classroom were seen as necessary for vocabulary development and genre familiarity.

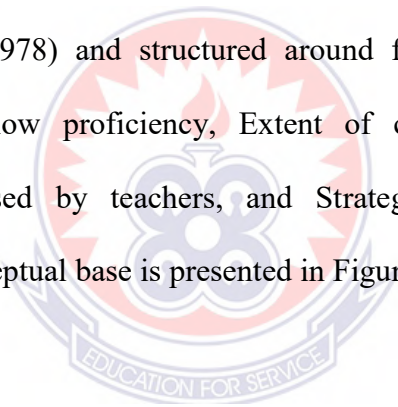
Other studies have examined broader school community strategies. Gunderson (2014), in research on rural language classrooms, found that teachers advocate for community reading programmes and peer tutoring schemes to build a culture of writing beyond formal lessons. Teachers in Gunderson's study argued that collaborative structures create additional spaces for students to practise English writing, which is particularly valuable where classroom time and resources are limited. Similarly, Dogan and Kasapoğlu (2017) reported that teachers view writing portfolios and reflective journals as useful tools for monitoring progress and encouraging metacognitive awareness among learners. These tools, according to their research, supported student ownership of the writing process and led to gradual improvements in quality and confidence.

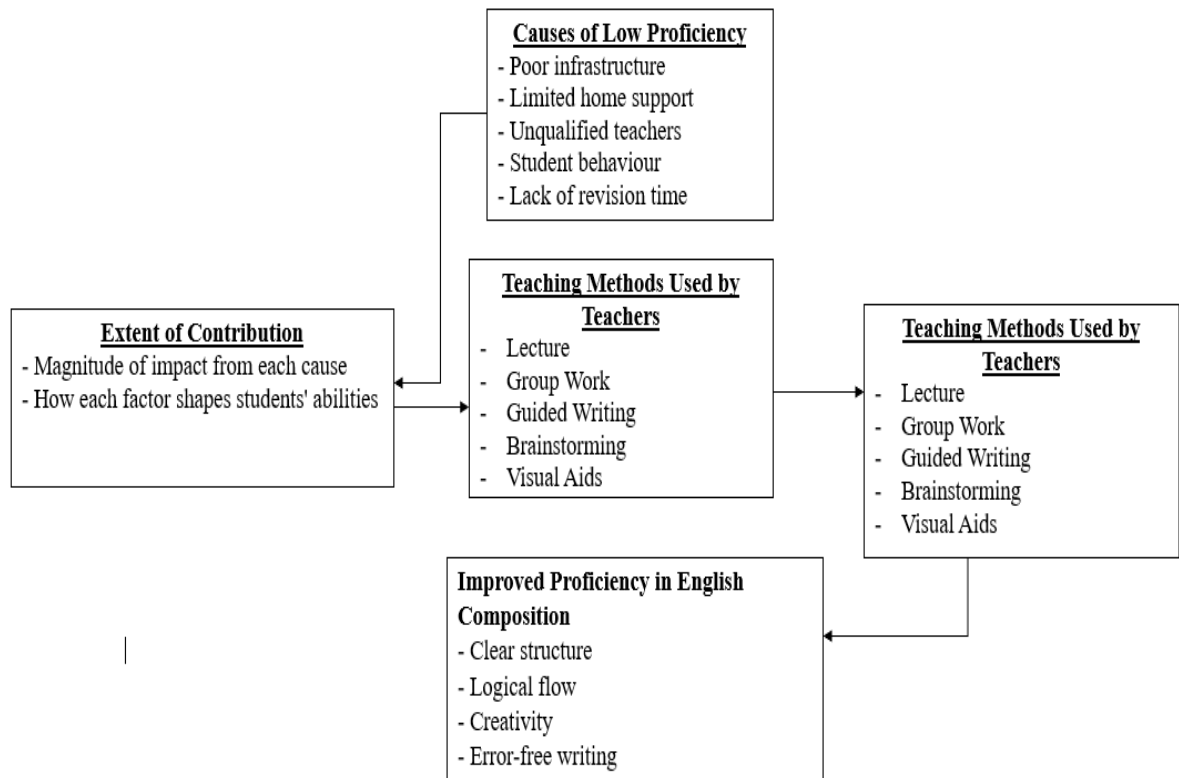
In contexts similar to Ghana, Mensah and Atta (2020) explored teachers' recommendations for improving English performance in rural districts. Their findings revealed that teachers often express a need for locally relevant teaching materials that reflect students' socio-cultural experiences. They argued that when instructional texts align with learners' lived realities, students demonstrate better engagement and greater ability to transfer language skills into meaningful writing tasks. This aligns with the position of Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2016), who showed that culturally responsive pedagogy increases student interest in written tasks and reduces anxiety linked to unfamiliar topics a frequent barrier in composition writing.

Despite these contributions, the literature still lacks context-specific studies from rural Ghanaian districts that capture teachers' grounded suggestions shaped by local socio-economic, linguistic, and infrastructural conditions. Most existing studies either generalise from urban or semi-urban schools or focus on broader English performance rather than composition skill development. There is also limited evidence on how teachers themselves prioritise strategies when constrained by factors such as large class sizes, insufficient materials, and limited English exposure outside the classroom conditions that are typical in districts like Central Tongu.

### **2.3. Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual base is underpinned by the Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing (Rosenblatt, 1978) and structured around four key components of your research; Causes of low proficiency, Extent of contribution of these causes, Methods/techniques used by teachers, and Strategies to improve composition performance. The conceptual base is presented in Figure 1.





**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework (Researcher's Construct)

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored on five interconnected themes derived from the study's purposes. These themes cause of low proficiency, extent of contribution, teaching methods and techniques, strategies for improvement, and student proficiency represent a logical flow of how English composition performance is shaped within the context of Junior High Schools in the Central Tongu District.

**Causes of Low Proficiency**, outlines the foundational issues responsible for the challenges students face in developing effective composition skills. These causes are multifaceted, including poor school infrastructure, limited access to electricity and libraries, lack of teaching and learning resources, and minimal parental involvement. Additionally, teacher-related issues such as low motivation, unfavourable working conditions, and student behaviour such as indiscipline and poor study habits also contribute to the problem. These systemic and contextual factors create barriers that impede students from acquiring the necessary writing competencies.

**Extent of Contribution** captures the varying degrees to which these causes impact students' writing performance. For example, inadequate revision time and late preparation for the BECE were highlighted as high-impact contributors, indicating a serious gap in academic planning and student readiness. While other factors like indiscipline and home-based limitations (e.g., absence of a learning role model) were also important, their effect varied across schools and contexts. This component of the framework helps determine the relative weight of each challenge, aiding in the prioritization of interventions.

**Teaching Methods and Techniques** focuses on the instructional strategies employed by teachers in English composition classrooms. Data from both the questionnaires and lesson observations reveal that lecture and question-and-answer approaches are the most commonly used methods, largely due to their practicality in managing large classes. However, more interactive and student-centred techniques such as brainstorming, guided writing, and peer editing were seldom observed. These methods, though rarely used, could significantly improve student engagement and writing ability if properly implemented. Thus, teaching technique serves as a mediating factor that can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of the earlier causes.

**Strategies for Improvement** presents actionable pathways to address the identified problems. These include providing a more conducive learning environment, promoting parental involvement, equipping teachers with in-service training, and encouraging the use of learner-centred pedagogies. Such strategies function as practical levers to close the performance gap. When adequately supported by Ghana Education Service and all stakeholders, the interventions can enhance teacher effectiveness and student motivation in writing.

The final theme, proficiency in English Composition, represents the definitive purpose of the framework. This outcome refers to learners' ability to write clearly, logically, and creatively across various forms and genres of composition. Improved proficiency is expected to translate into better performance in national examinations like the BECE and to support broader academic achievement. Achieving this outcome depends on addressing the root causes, understanding the weight of their impact, refining teaching practices, and implementing strategic supports.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Overview

This chapter offers methodological perspective of the study. To this end, the chapter spells out the philosophical foundation, approach, design, population, sampling and sampling techniques adopted. The chapter also discusses the instrument for data collection, validity and reliability, trustworthiness, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

This study was grounded in the philosophical foundation of pragmatism. The selection of pragmatism was deliberate and methodologically appropriate given the complexity of the research problem and the type of evidence required to address it comprehensively. Pragmatism recognises that reality is not singular or fixed but is interpreted through both observable conditions and human experience. Morgan (2007) explains that pragmatism moves beyond the rigid opposition between positivism and constructivism and instead focuses on what works in addressing a research problem. Creswell (2014) further argues that pragmatism allows researchers to draw on multiple methods when a single philosophical stance cannot adequately explain a phenomenon. This flexibility made it particularly suitable for investigating low English composition proficiency among Junior High School students.

The research problem under investigation is multidimensional in nature. Low proficiency in English composition may be influenced by measurable factors such as instructional time, teacher qualification, frequency of writing practice, and availability of learning resources. At the same time, it may be shaped by subjective elements such

as students' attitudes toward writing, teacher expectations, classroom interaction patterns, and socio-cultural influences. A strictly positivist orientation would have confined the inquiry to quantifiable indicators and statistical relationships, potentially neglecting the contextual and experiential dimensions of the problem. An exclusively constructivist stance would have privileged perceptions and lived experiences but limited the ability to identify patterns across schools. Pragmatism provided a coherent philosophical position that permitted the integration of both measurable evidence and contextual interpretation.

The study adopted a mixed methods orientation that required the collection of quantitative data to determine the dominant causes of low composition proficiency and to assess the extent to which these causes contribute to the problem. Quantitative analysis made it possible to identify trends, relationships, and relative levels of influence among variables. Qualitative inquiry was also necessary to explore the underlying reasons behind these patterns, examine classroom instructional practices in context, and capture teachers' perspectives on improvement strategies. Pragmatism supports methodological pluralism and prioritises the research questions over allegiance to a single epistemological position (Morgan, 2007). The philosophy therefore ensured coherence between the research design and the objectives of the study.

Pragmatism also aligns with the practical orientation of the study. The purpose of the research was not limited to describing the problem of low English composition proficiency but extended to generating actionable recommendations for improving teaching practices and student outcomes in the Central Tongu District. Biesta (2010) emphasises that pragmatic inquiry evaluates knowledge in terms of its usefulness and its capacity to inform effective action. The findings of this study were intended to

guide instructional improvement, inform professional development for teachers, and contribute to district-level educational planning. A philosophy centred on practical consequences was therefore more defensible than one focused primarily on theoretical abstraction.

The adoption of pragmatism ensured that the research remained flexible, problem-centred, and outcome-oriented. It permitted the integration of statistical evidence with contextual explanation, thereby strengthening the overall explanatory power of the study. This philosophical foundation was therefore appropriate for addressing a complex educational problem that required both empirical measurement and interpretive understanding within the specific context of the Central Tongu District.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

The study adopted a mixed methods research approach involving the systematic collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation. The decision to use this approach was grounded in the complexity of the research problem. Low English composition proficiency among Junior High School students is influenced by measurable academic variables as well as contextual, behavioural, and instructional factors. An approach limited to numerical measurement would not adequately explain why the problem persists, while an approach restricted to qualitative accounts would weaken the ability to determine patterns and relative influence across schools. Mixed methods research offers a structured way to combine breadth and depth within one coherent design. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) argue that mixed methods research is particularly appropriate when a single methodological tradition cannot sufficiently address the research questions.

The quantitative component of the study was designed to generate broad, generalisable data from a relatively large sample of Junior High School students and English teachers. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data on linguistic challenges, teaching practices, resource availability, and other school-related constraints. Statistical analysis made it possible to identify dominant causes of low composition proficiency and to assess the extent to which each factor contributes to the problem. This phase provided measurable evidence and established the magnitude and distribution of the issue within the Central Tongu District.

The qualitative component complemented the quantitative findings through semi-structured interviews with selected English teachers. These interviews generated detailed accounts of classroom realities, instructional decision-making, professional challenges, and contextual influences that could not be captured through closed-ended instruments. The qualitative data served an explanatory function, clarifying patterns that emerged from the quantitative analysis and uncovering underlying mechanisms behind observed trends. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) note that mixed methods designs are particularly valuable when researchers seek not only to identify statistical relationships but also to understand the processes that produce them.

The adoption of a mixed methods approach strengthened the overall validity and credibility of the study. Converging evidence from different data sources enhanced confidence in the findings and reduced the limitations associated with relying on a single method. Integration of quantitative trends with qualitative explanations produced a more comprehensive account of the problem than either method could achieve independently. The approach also ensured alignment with the pragmatic philosophical foundation of the study, which prioritises the research problem and endorses methodological pluralism when addressing complex educational challenges.

### 3.3 Research Design

The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, a variant of mixed methods research in which quantitative data collection and analysis precede qualitative inquiry, and the qualitative phase is explicitly designed to explain, refine, and extend the quantitative findings. This design is appropriate when researchers seek to first establish statistical trends and relationships and then develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying those results (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The selection of this design was not procedural convenience but a methodological necessity arising from the structure of the research objectives.

The first phase of the study consisted of quantitative data collection through structured questionnaires administered to Junior High School students and English Language teachers in the Central Tongu District. The quantitative strand addressed the initial research objectives, which required identifying the causes of low English composition proficiency and determining the extent to which those causes contribute to the problem. Numerical data allowed for the measurement of variables such as linguistic difficulties, instructional strategies, resource constraints, and student-related factors. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of prevalence and severity, while inferential analysis enabled the examination of relationships and relative influence among variables. This phase established empirical patterns and generated generalisable conclusions about the magnitude and distribution of the problem across the sampled schools.

Quantitative findings alone, however, could not adequately explain why certain factors were dominant or how they operated within classroom contexts. Statistical

significance does not automatically reveal pedagogical processes, teacher decision-making, or contextual constraints. The explanatory sequential design addresses this limitation through a second, qualitative phase that builds directly on the results of the first phase. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected group of English teachers after analysing the quantitative data. Participant selection was guided by the need to obtain information that could clarify or elaborate on specific quantitative outcomes. The qualitative strand therefore functioned as an explanatory mechanism rather than an independent exploratory inquiry. Interview questions were developed from the statistical results. If quantitative analysis indicated that students' grammatical inaccuracies were a major contributor to low composition proficiency, interviews probed how grammar was taught, the challenges teachers faced in reinforcing writing conventions, and the extent to which curriculum demands constrained effective instruction. If limited writing practice emerged as a significant issue, interviews examined time allocation, assessment pressures, and institutional expectations. This deliberate linkage between phases ensured methodological integration rather than parallel data collection. The explanatory sequential design was justified on several grounds. First, it ensured logical progression from breadth to depth. Quantitative results established what was happening and the extent of occurrence across the district. Qualitative inquiry then clarified why those patterns existed and how they were sustained in practice. Second, the design strengthened interpretive validity. Qualitative evidence reduced the risk of superficial interpretation of statistical findings and provided contextual grounding for policy and instructional recommendations. Third, the structure enhanced practical applicability. Educational stakeholders require not only evidence of statistical

relationships but also an understanding of the operational realities that must be addressed in intervention planning.

The explanatory sequential design therefore provided methodological rigour, analytical coherence, and practical relevance. It enabled the study to move systematically from empirical measurement to contextual explanation, ensuring that conclusions drawn about low English composition proficiency among Junior High School students in the Central Tongu District were both statistically supported and contextually informed.

### **3.4 Setting**

The study was conducted in Central Tongu District, located in the southern part of the Volta Region of Ghana. The district lies within a predominantly rural belt and is geographically positioned along the Volta River, linking it to neighbouring districts such as Akatsi South, Adaklu, North Tongu, South Tongu, Ada East, and Keta Municipality. Its location places it within a corridor of both inland and coastal economic activity, yet large portions of the district remain agriculturally driven and semi-rural in character. This rural orientation has direct implications for school infrastructure, teacher distribution, access to instructional materials, and exposure to English outside formal educational settings.

The linguistic context of the district provides a strong justification for its selection. The population is predominantly Ewe-speaking, and Ewe functions as the primary language of home and community interaction. English, although the official language of instruction in Ghanaian schools, operates largely as a second language within this environment. Students therefore experience limited authentic exposure to English beyond classroom instruction. Composition writing, which requires vocabulary range,

syntactic control, and discourse competence, is particularly vulnerable in contexts where learners have minimal opportunities to practise English in meaningful communicative situations. The linguistic ecology of Central Tongu therefore presents a realistic and contextually rich setting for examining persistent challenges in English composition proficiency.

Socio-economic conditions within the district further strengthen the case for its selection. The local economy is largely dependent on subsistence farming, fishing, and small-scale trading. Household income levels in many communities are modest, which may constrain access to supplementary learning materials, private tutoring, and digital learning resources. Schools in such settings often operate with limited libraries, inadequate writing materials, and constrained technological support. These structural conditions can directly influence students' writing development, particularly in areas such as extensive reading, vocabulary acquisition, and feedback-rich instruction. Investigating English composition proficiency in this context allows for the examination of how structural and resource-related factors intersect with pedagogical practices.

Cultural and social structures within Central Tongu also shape educational participation and expectations. The district operates within strong traditional authority systems and maintains patrilineal social arrangements. Family roles, gender expectations, and community obligations may influence the level of academic supervision and time allocated to school-related tasks at home. In rural communities, students may combine schooling with domestic or economic responsibilities, which can reduce the time available for extended writing practice. Composition writing demands sustained cognitive engagement, drafting, revision, and teacher feedback;

these processes require time and support that may not be consistently available in such contexts.

Administrative history adds another dimension to the justification. Central Tongu was carved out as a separate district in 2012 as part of Ghana's decentralisation reforms aimed at improving local governance and service delivery. Relatively recent administrative restructuring can influence educational planning, allocation of resources, and staffing stability. Newer districts sometimes experience transitional constraints in infrastructure development and institutional consolidation. Examining English composition proficiency within such a district provides insight into how decentralised educational management structures operate in practice and how local educational challenges evolve within emerging administrative systems.

The district therefore represents a context where linguistic, socio-economic, infrastructural, and administrative factors converge. It typifies many rural districts in Ghana where English functions as a second language, educational resources are unevenly distributed, and students' exposure to academic writing practices is limited. Findings generated from Central Tongu are likely to have analytical relevance beyond the district itself, particularly for comparable rural and peri-rural contexts across the Volta Region and Ghana more broadly. The selection of the district was therefore not incidental but strategically aligned with the objectives of the study, which sought to investigate structural and instructional contributors to low English composition proficiency within a realistic and policy-relevant educational environment.

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

Population is the populace to be studied. It contains all the objects (or individuals) having certain stipulated characteristics (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). They further state

that it is to this population that the researcher is going to generalize his/her results. The population for a study, according to Rubin and Babbies (1989), is the theoretically specified set of units of study. They referred to the "study elements" as the unit of things or individuals from whence information is obtained and forms the source of analysis. Participants in the study comprised all Junior High school students and English language instructors of the Central Tongu District.

### **3.5.1 Target population**

Target population, according Lavrakas (2008), includes all units for which a study or research data are to be used to make inferences. This is to say that the target population of a study defines the people or objects for which a research finding can be generalized. Lavrakas (2008), added that a target population also known as theoretical population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which the researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. In this, the target population JHS students and JHS English Language teachers in the Central Tongu District.

### **3.5.2 Accessible population**

This a subset of the target population that is practically and realistically available to the researcher for data collection. The accessible population included 2,345 individuals, consisting of 113 English Language teachers and JHS students selected from three of the eight educational circuits within the Central Tongu District. The choice of the accessible population was justified on logistical, administrative, and methodological grounds. Firstly, due to time constraints, resource limitations, and the need to obtain in-depth and reliable data, it was not feasible to involve the entire target population across all eight circuits. Selecting three circuits enabled the researcher to manage the research process efficiently while maintaining diversity and

representativeness within the sample. The accessible population includes both students and teachers, which aligns with the mixed methods and pragmatic orientation of the study. Including both groups ensures that the study involves a comprehensive view of the issue students' experiences and proficiency levels, as well as teachers' instructional methods and perspectives.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

Sampling, as defined by Kumar (1999), refers to the process of selecting a small proportion or sub-group of a population for scientific observation and analysis. Seidu (2006) also notes that a sample is a subgroup of the population chosen to represent the entire group in a research study. According to Alhassan (2006), sampling techniques involve the systematic assortment of participants from a population in a way that enables generalization of findings while reducing bias.

A total of three hundred (300) J.H.S. students, representing approximately 13% of the accessible student population, and ninety (90) English Language teachers, drawn from the accessible teacher population, were sampled for the quantitative phase of the study. Out of these, 10 teachers were selected for interview and observation. The combined sample size of 390 respondents was considered adequate for conducting statistical analyses. Marks (1966) recommends that a minimum sample of 200 is sufficient for robust quantitative analysis, and this study exceeds that threshold to enhance reliability and generalizability within the accessible population.

### **3.7 Sampling Procedure**

Two sampling techniques were used; stratified random and maximum variation sampling.

### **3.7.1 Quantitative Sampling**

For the quantitative phase, stratified random sampling was used to select the students and teachers to represent the sample for the study. The accessible schools within the three circuits were first grouped according to their circuit designation. From each circuit, schools were randomly selected, and within those schools, students were randomly chosen to ensure proportional representation. As Kombo and Tromp (2006) explain, stratification ensures that each subgroup within the population is fairly represented in the sample, thus minimizing sampling bias and increasing representativeness.

The use of stratified random sampling was particularly appropriate in this context because it allowed the researcher to reflect the diverse student demographics across the three circuits while maintaining statistical rigor. Kothari (2006) further notes that this technique produces more precise estimates of population parameters and is especially effective when dealing with a relatively homogeneous population segmented into identifiable strata. The selection of 390 respondents from an accessible population within three educational circuits was both methodologically sound and contextually appropriate. It enabled the researcher to conduct a focused yet representative study on the factors contributing to low English composition proficiency among J.H.S. students in the Central Tongu District.

### **3.7.2 Qualitative sampling**

Here, participants were carefully chosen using the maximum variation sampling strategy, a purposive sampling technique that seeks to capture a wide range of perspectives related to the phenomenon under investigation. This approach was employed to ensure that the interviews reflected the diverse experiences,

backgrounds, and characteristics of both English Language teachers and Junior High School (J.H.S.) students within the selected circuits of the Central Tongu District.

For the selection of English Language teachers, several criteria were considered to achieve maximum variation. These included teaching experience (ranging from newly trained to veteran teachers), academic qualifications (Diploma, Bachelor and Postgraduate degrees), school location and gender. The inclusion of teachers with varying years of teaching experience and professional qualifications allowed the researcher to explore how instructional practices, perceptions of student writing challenges, and pedagogical strategies differed across subgroups. Teachers were also selected from different school environments to gain insights into how school context influences the teaching of English composition. This variation enabled a rich and nuanced thoughtful of instructional realities and challenges facing teachers in different settings within the district.

For the selection of students, maximum variation sampling involved selecting participants based on gender, academic performance levels (high, average, and low achievers in English composition), and geographical location of their schools. This ensured that the students interviewed could provide diverse and representative accounts of their writing experiences, difficulties, and perceptions of English composition lessons. High-performing students offered insights into what facilitates success in composition writing, while low-performing students highlighted the obstacles they face. The inclusion of students from different performance bands and backgrounds allowed for a balanced and inclusive exploration of the issue.

The decision to adopt maximum variation sampling was rooted in the objective of the qualitative phase: to deepen understanding of the quantitative findings by exploring

the breadth of experiences rather than statistical generalizability. According to Patton (2002), maximum variation sampling enhances the credibility of qualitative findings by illustrating patterns that cut across participant diversity.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instruments**

A research instrument can be said to be a tool used to elicit responses from the target respondents necessary to help in data analysis (Kumar, 2018). A research instrument can be closed-ended questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, interview guides, or classroom discussion. The choice of any of these instruments depends on the purpose of the study and research approach.

#### **3.8.1 Closed-Ended Questionnaire**

This study employed a 4-point Likert-Scale closed-ended (structured) questionnaire to obtain the needed responses. The adoption of this type of instrument resonates with the quantitative research approach; hence the responses were coded from 1-4 with 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being strongly agree. The use of closed-ended questionnaires has proven to be a potent instrument as it provides an efficient means of collecting data on a large scale and makes quantitative analysis stress-free (Seliger & Shohamy 1989).

The instrument is split into five (5) sections (Section A to E). Section A collects demographic information. Section B contains eight (8) statements seeking to elicit responses necessary to address research question one (1), thus, causal factors low academic performance of JHS students in English Language Composition. Section C contains six (6) items that seek to solicit respondents' views on the extent to which the factors contribute to the low academic performance of the pupils as Section D seeks to obtain information on the various teaching methods/techniques employed in

teaching English Language Composition. Finally, Section E contains ten (10) statements that seek to identify better strategies to fashion out to improve the performance in English Language Composition. For the purpose of triangulation, two strands of questionnaire were developed seeking to elicit responses on same areas identified from both teachers and students. The choice of this approach is considered appropriate since it helps to enhance the credibility of the results.

### **3.8.2 Semi-structured interview guide**

The semi-structured interview guide was developed as a qualitative data collection instrument to complement the quantitative data obtained through the structured questionnaire. This instrument was aligned with the qualitative strand of the mixed-methods research, specifically the explanatory sequential design. The interview guide was designed to generate deeper insights into the quantitative findings by allowing participants to express their experiences, beliefs, and suggestions regarding English composition instruction and students' writing proficiency in a more flexible and conversational manner.

The interview guide contained open-ended questions organized around the core themes of the study: causes of low proficiency in English composition, the extent of the impact of these causes, teaching methods employed by English language teachers, and strategies for improving students' composition writing. These questions were structured to prompt elaboration, facilitate clarification of answers, and enable follow-up questions align on participants' answers.

This guide was developed based on insights from literature and themes emerging from the quantitative data, ensuring coherence between both data collection phases. For instance, questions explored issues such as students' linguistic challenges, teaching

experiences and constraints, instructional resources, and perceptions of curriculum effectiveness. Additionally, interview questions examined the practical strategies used by teachers and solicited their views on systemic improvements that could enhance students' writing outcomes.

Participants were interviewed one-on-one in settings that ensured confidentiality and minimal distraction. The semi-structured format provided the flexibility to explore issues that emerged during the conversation while maintaining focus on the research objectives. Interview sessions were audio-recorded, with participants' consent, to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

Semi-structured interviews adoption was justified on the basis that it allowed for a richer understanding of the contextual factors behind students' writing performance—factors that might not be captured through closed-ended questionnaires alone. This method enabled the researcher to capture participants' narratives in their own words, allowing themes such as teacher motivation, classroom realities, pedagogical approaches, and socio-cultural constraints to be explored in depth.

Furthermore, the interviews served as a triangulation tool to validate and expand upon the quantitative findings. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) noted that triangulating data sources in a mixed-methods study enhances the credibility and depth of understanding of complex educational issues. In this study, interviews with both teachers and selected students provided nuanced insights that illuminated how and why certain factors affected writing performance, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of the overall research. The semi-structured interview guide was a critical instrument for collecting qualitative data that deepened the researcher's understanding of the issues surrounding low English composition proficiency. It allowed the

researcher to explore lived experiences, teaching practices, and stakeholder recommendations in detail, which helped enrich the interpretation of the quantitative data.

### **3.8.3 Observation guide**

The observation guide served as a non-intrusive instrument designed to gather firsthand information on the actual classroom practices of English Language teachers with respect to the teaching of composition writing. Observation, as a data collection method, allows researchers to study behaviour and teaching strategies in their natural context, capturing nuances that may not be revealed through self-reported questionnaires or interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This tool was developed to support the qualitative phase of the study and to complement responses obtained through questionnaires and interviews, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of the findings through methodological triangulation.

The observation guide focused on key areas relevant to the teaching of English composition, including:

- The teaching strategies used (e.g., lecture, group work, guided writing, brainstorming, peer editing).
- The level of student participation and engagement.
- The use of teaching and learning resources (e.g., textbooks, writing prompts, ICT tools).
- The extent to which the process approach (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) was employed.
- Teacher behaviours such as classroom management, feedback provision, and language scaffolding.

To maintain consistency and structure during the data collection process, a structured observation checklist and field note format were employed. The researcher conducted non-participant observations across selected schools in the three circuits of the Central Tongu District. Lessons were observed without interference, and notes were taken on observed practices, interaction patterns, and instructional decisions. To ensure ethical standards, prior consent was obtained from headteachers and the English teachers involved. Observations were carried out in a manner that preserved classroom routines and student anonymity.

The use of the observation guide was justified based on the need to validate the extent to which reported teaching practices aligned with actual classroom behaviour. As Patton (2015) asserts, observations provide an opportunity to compare what participants say they do with what they actually do. In this study, the tool played a vital role in identifying discrepancies between stated and enacted instructional strategies and shed light on contextual factors such as overcrowded classrooms and time constraints that influence teaching decisions.

### **3.9 Validity of the Instruments**

Validity is the extent to which a research instrument actually measures what it is designed to. For this study, face validity and content validity were employed in order to ensure that the interview guide and questionnaire were reliable and sufficiently pointed toward the objectives of the research. The researcher employed several practical steps to ensure the instruments were not just appropriate but even effective for data collection.

### **3.9.1 Face Validity of the Questionnaire**

Face validity pertains to the extent to which an instrument appears, on the surface, to measure what it is intended to measure. According to Ary et al. (2010), face validity involves subjective judgments by experts or individuals familiar with the content area to determine whether the items look appropriate, clear, and meaningful.

To ensure face validity in this study, the initial draft of the questionnaire was submitted to academic supervisors and two experienced English language teachers from the Central Tongu District. These reviewers were asked to evaluate the clarity, structure, and wording of each item. Based on their feedback, several revisions were made to improve the precision and understandability of the items.

For instance, ambiguous terms were rephrased into simpler language to match the cognitive level of Junior High School students. Items that were considered too broad or overlapping were either split into more specific sub-items or removed altogether. Additionally, technical educational terms were replaced with language familiar to the average respondent. These adjustments helped to enhance the visual and conceptual appeal of the questionnaire and increased the likelihood of collecting accurate responses.

### **3.9.2 Content Validity of the Questionnaire**

Content validity is the extent to which a measurement instrument covers the entire range of meanings included within a concept (Biddix, 2017). It determines whether the instrument includes an adequate and representative sample of items that cover all relevant aspects of the construct being measured. To ensure strong content validity, the development of questionnaire items was grounded in a thorough review of existing literature on writing proficiency, language pedagogy, teaching methods, and

educational strategies (e.g., Hyland, 2003; Nation, 2013; Uysal & Banoglu, 2018). Each item was carefully crafted to correspond with specific themes and sub-themes from the literature that aligned with the research questions.

After the initial construction of the instrument, the questionnaire was again submitted to two university research supervisors who are experts in language education and educational measurement. They conducted a thorough item-by-item analysis to assess whether the questions adequately covered all aspects of the study's objectives. The reviewers evaluated whether the questions were relevant, complete, and aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

During this review process, practical steps were taken to ensure rigor. For example:

- Each item was mapped against a corresponding research objective.
- Redundant items were removed or merged.
- Gaps identified in coverage were addressed by adding new items, especially in the sections on strategies for improving writing proficiency.
- Items were further cross-checked against national curriculum standards and language teaching benchmarks to ensure appropriateness.

Following this review, a pilot test was conducted in a nearby school circuit not included in the main sample. Feedback from the pilot group of ten teachers and twenty students was analysed to confirm whether the items were understandable, relevant, and elicited the kind of responses needed. Minor modifications were again made to improve coherence and completeness.

As shown in Table 3.1 of the instrument validation section, all thirty-one (31) questionnaire items were deemed valid by expert reviewers. The rigorous process of literature grounding, expert review, and pilot testing ensured that the questionnaire

achieved a high level of content validity and would yield data capable of addressing the research objectives.

**Table 3.1: Instrument validity**

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Valid Items</b>	<b>Validity (%)</b>
Factors contributing to the low academic performance of JHS pupils in English Language Composition	8	8	100.00
Extent to which these factors contribute to the low academic performance in English Language Composition	6		100.00
Teaching methods/techniques employed by the English Language teachers in teaching the English Language Composition	7		100.00
Possible strategies necessary to improve the performance in English Language Composition	10		100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source: Field Data (2022)**

### 3.10 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Instrument reliability refers to the degree to which a data collection tool yields consistent and stable results over repeated applications under similar conditions. According to Yin (2018), a research instrument is considered reliable if it can consistently reproduce similar results across multiple administrations. That is, if the instrument is used in different settings, by different researchers, or at different times, it should yield the same or very similar results, assuming that the underlying phenomenon being measured remains unchanged.

DeMatthews et al. (2008) also emphasized that reliability concerns the consistency, stability, and repeatability of the measurement instrument. A reliable tool minimizes

the influence of random error or environmental fluctuations on the data, thereby ensuring that any variations in results are due to actual changes in the phenomena being studied, rather than measurement inconsistencies. In the context of this study, it was crucial that the instrument used to assess the factors influencing English composition writing proficiency produced consistent results to ensure the credibility of the findings.

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, test-retest reliability was employed. This involved administering the same instrument to the same group of respondents at two different points in time under similar conditions. The aim was to assess the consistency of the responses between the two administrations. A time interval of two weeks was allowed between the first and second administration of the instrument to reduce memory effects, while ensuring the conditions under which the instrument was applied remained relatively constant.

The pilot test was conducted in two selected Junior High Schools within the Central Tongu District that were not included in the main study sample. This ensured that the instrument was tested under contextual conditions similar to those of the actual study without contaminating the final data. A total of 20 English language teachers and 40 students participated in the pilot exercise.

After the pilot testing, the data collected were subjected to internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is a widely accepted measure of reliability for Likert-scale questionnaires. As presented in Table 3 (not reproduced here), the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the different thematic sections of the questionnaire ranged from 0.734 to 0.804. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010),

a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.70 or above indicates acceptable reliability, suggesting that the instrument has high internal consistency.

The reliability coefficients obtained imply that the questionnaire items for each section reliably measured the underlying constructs, including: causes of low English composition performance, extent of influence of these causes, methods used in teaching composition, and strategies for improvement. These findings demonstrate that the items within each thematic category were coherent and consistent in capturing respondents' perceptions. The reliability of the instrument was thoroughly ensured through a well-structured pilot test, the use of test-retest methods, and the computation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The outcomes confirmed that the instrument was both stable and dependable for use in the full-scale study, thereby increasing the robustness and trustworthiness of the research findings.

**Table 1.2: Instrument Reliability**

Category	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Extent to which these factors contribute to the low academic performance in English Language Composition	0.745	6
Teaching methods/techniques employed by the English Language teachers in teaching the English Language Composition	0.734	7
Possible strategies necessary to improve the performance in English Language Composition	0.804	10
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.762</b>	

Source: Field Data (2022)

### **3.11 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the research process and findings are credible, dependable, and authentic, ensuring that the results are a true reflection of participants' experiences and not the researcher's bias or misrepresentation (Nowell et al., 2017). Within a mixed-methods framework guided by pragmatism, ensuring the rigour of the qualitative component is essential for drawing sound conclusions that can inform practical educational interventions. The study adhered to four key criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln et al., 2018).

#### **3.11.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the accuracy and believability of the research findings from the standpoint of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, credibility was achieved through several measures. Firstly, data triangulation was ensured by collecting qualitative data from both teachers and students, thereby capturing varied perspectives on the issue of English composition proficiency. Secondly, member validation was employed, where a few participants were consulted after transcription to verify the accuracy of their responses. Additionally, peer examination and consultation with academic supervisors helped validate the interpretations made during data analysis. The use of in-depth interviews and iterative coding also helped the researcher remain closely connected to participants' meanings and experiences throughout the process.

### **3.11.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the study's findings can be applied to similar contexts beyond the study site (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). To facilitate transferability, the researcher provided comprehensive contextual information about the study setting, including the demographic background of participants, the educational environment in Central Tongu District, and the specific challenges in English language instruction. This rich, thick description allows readers to assess the potential relevance of the findings to their own contexts. The use of maximum variation sampling further supports transferability by including participants with diverse experiences in teaching and learning English composition.

### **3.11.3 Dependability**

Dependability relates to the consistency and repeatability of the research process over time (Morse, 2015). To ensure dependability, a detailed audit trail was maintained throughout the study. This included documentation of how the interview questions were developed, how participants were selected, and how data were analysed and interpreted. The researcher ensured that each step of the process was logical, traceable, and documented, allowing for future replication of the study under similar conditions. The coding process was also reviewed by a second independent researcher to check for coherence and to validate theme development.

### **3.11.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability concerns the neutrality of the findings that the data reflect participants' views rather than researcher bias (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, confirmability was strengthened through reflexivity, where the researcher actively acknowledged and documented personal assumptions, prior beliefs, and professional

background that could influence interpretation. A reflective journal was used to record insights, decisions, and other relevant matters.

### **3.12 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering information relevant to answering a research question, testing a hypothesis, or exploring a phenomenon (Polit & Beck, 2010). Kombo and Tromp (2006) also describe it as the process through which a researcher assembles targeted information to support or refute specific claims. For this mixed-methods study, data were gathered using both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The collection process was conducted in two distinct but connected phases as outlined in the sequential explanatory design framework.

Prior to data collection, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba. This letter served as an official document that facilitated access to the field. With this letter, the researcher visited the Central Tongu District Education Directorate and formally engaged the District Director of Education to explain the purpose, scope, and ethical considerations of the study. Upon securing approval from the Directorate, the researcher proceeded to visit selected schools in three of the eight educational circuits in the district.

#### **3.12.1 Quantitative Data Collection**

For the quantitative phase, the researcher met with head teachers and English Language teachers at the selected schools to introduce the study and seek their cooperation. After establishing rapport and obtaining informed consent, the researcher distributed hard copies of the closed-ended questionnaires to both English Language

teachers and Junior High School students. Respondents were guided on how to complete the items, particularly clarifying the four-point Likert scale options.

The questionnaires were self-administered, and the researcher remained present throughout the process to respond to any concerns or ambiguities raised by the respondents. This direct administration of the instruments contributed to a higher response rate and improved the reliability of the responses. In instances where participants were unable to complete the questionnaire immediately, the researcher scheduled return visits for follow-up and collection. Participants were also reminded via text messages and phone calls to ensure timely completion and submission of the instruments.

### **3.12.2 Qualitative Data Collection**

Following the completion and preliminary analysis of the quantitative data, the researcher moved into the qualitative phase. This stage involved the use of semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring the responses gathered in the first phase more deeply. Maximum variation sampling was used to purposively select a diverse group of teachers and students for interviews, ensuring the inclusion of participants from different circuits, schools, gender, and years of teaching or learning experience.

The interview guide was developed based on themes that emerged from the quantitative data and literature review. Prior to the interviews, consent was obtained from all participants, and ethical considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were emphasized. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at times convenient for participants either during break periods or after school hours in quiet, private locations within the school premises to ensure comfort and minimize distractions.

Each interview session lasted approximately 25 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. In cases where recording was not permitted, detailed notes were taken. The researcher ensured that probing and clarifying questions were asked to elicit rich, in-depth responses. Upon completion, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the data were analysed thematically using coding techniques. The phased data collection process allowed the researcher to build a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting students' English composition writing proficiency and to explore the instructional strategies and contextual dynamics influencing teaching and learning in the Central Tongu District.

Classroom observation was conducted to collect real-time data on the actual teaching techniques employed by English Language teachers in English composition lessons across selected Junior High Schools in the Central Tongu District. A purposive sampling approach was used to select six schools from three educational circuits, and a total of ten English composition lessons were observed. Prior to the observations, permission was sought from headteachers and consent was obtained from teachers after clearly explaining the purpose and non-intrusive nature of the study. An observation guide, developed from the literature and research questions, was used to ensure consistency in capturing key indicators such as teaching strategies, student engagement, use of teaching and learning materials, and the implementation of the writing process. The researcher observed each lesson from the back of the classroom to minimize disruption, taking detailed notes using a checklist and supplementary field notes. Each session lasted the full duration of the lesson (about 40–50 minutes). After each session, immediate reflections and additional insights were documented to enrich the observation data. The information gathered was analysed descriptively using frequency counts and thematic interpretation, allowing the researcher to

triangulate findings from the questionnaire and interviews with observed classroom practices. This strengthened the credibility and validity of the study's findings related to teaching techniques in English composition.

### **3.13 Data Analysis Procedure**

The analysis of data in this study followed the sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, where quantitative data were first collected and analysed, and the findings were subsequently used to inform the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach was selected to provide a deeper understanding of the causes of low English composition writing proficiency among Junior High School (JHS) students and the instructional and strategic responses to this problem within the Central Tongu District.

#### **3.13.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis Procedure**

The quantitative data obtained through the structured questionnaires were first cleaned and coded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Each item on the questionnaire was assigned a numerical code, with the 4-point Likert scale items coded as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. Data entry was carefully double-checked for accuracy, and missing responses were appropriately treated using listwise deletion where necessary.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse demographic variables and to describe patterns of responses for each research question. These descriptive measures helped summarize the central tendencies and variability in responses across the sample. The results from the quantitative analysis were then summarized in tables and interpreted in relation to

the research questions. These findings guided the selection of participants for the qualitative phase and informed the development of follow-up interview questions.

### **3.13.2 Interview Data Analysis Procedure**

Following the quantitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected English Language teachers and JHS students. The data collected from the interviews were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework for thematic analysis. This method was appropriate as it provided a systematic yet flexible approach for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data.

The steps involved were as follows:

1. Familiarization with the Data: The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were read multiple times by the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Transcripts were imported into qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 12) where relevant segments were coded line-by-line. Coding was both deductive (based on the questionnaire themes) and inductive (allowing new ideas to emerge).
3. Searching for Themes: Codes were reviewed and organized into broader categories and initial themes, such as ~~in~~instructional constraints," ~~v~~ocabulary limitations," ~~t~~eacher feedback practices," and ~~s~~tudent motivation."
4. Reviewing Themes: These themes were reviewed across all transcripts to ensure internal consistency and relevance to the research objectives.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Final themes were clearly defined and named to capture the essence of the data in relation to the study's objectives.

6. Producing the Report: The final step involved weaving the thematic findings into a coherent narrative that was presented alongside relevant quotes from participants. These were compared with and used to further explain the statistical findings from the quantitative phase.

### **2.13.3 Observation Data Analysis Procedure**

The analysis of the observation data in this study followed a systematic qualitative approach, specifically using content and frequency analysis to examine classroom practices related to the teaching of English composition in selected Junior High Schools in the Central Tongu District. A structured observation guide was developed and used to record data across ten observed English lessons. The guide contained specific teaching indicators, such as the use of lecture method, group discussions, guided writing, peer review, use of teaching and learning materials, and student engagement.

After the classroom observations were completed, the data were organized into a matrix using the observation guide categories. Each indicator was assessed for its presence, frequency, and the manner of implementation across the lessons observed. The number of lessons in which each strategy was observed was tallied and presented as frequencies. These frequencies were then interpreted to identify the most and least commonly used instructional techniques. In addition to the frequency counts, qualitative remarks were recorded to provide context to the practices observed. These included reflections on how the techniques were applied, the level of student participation, teacher engagement, availability of instructional materials, and constraints such as large class sizes and limited time. These descriptive comments

were then thematically analysed to generate insights into the pedagogical realities of teaching composition in the observed schools.

### **3.14 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Finding**

The integration of findings in this study followed the principles of the sequential explanatory mixed methods design, in which quantitative data are collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to further elaborate, refine, or explain the initial findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The rationale for this approach was to combine the breadth and generalizability of quantitative data with the depth and contextual richness of qualitative insights.

In the interpretation phase, the findings from the quantitative strand generated through descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of questionnaire responses were examined alongside the emergent themes from the qualitative interviews. The purpose of this integration was to achieve methodological triangulation, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation, particularly the factors contributing to low writing proficiency among Junior High School (JHS) students and the strategies employed to address these issues in the Central Tongu District.

The integration process involved several key steps:

1. **Comparative Alignment of Results:** A matrix was developed to compare the quantitative results with the qualitative themes. For example, where the quantitative findings indicated that “limited vocabulary” and “lack of feedback” were among the top factors influencing poor writing outcomes, the interview data were reviewed to see how teachers and students described these challenges in their own words. This allowed the researcher to identify convergences and divergences in the data.

2. **Explanatory Linking:** Where the quantitative data identified statistically significant patterns such as a strong agreement among students that teacher feedback was inadequate interview responses were used to explain the underlying reasons. For instance, teachers in the interviews discussed time constraints, large class sizes, and lack of training in writing pedagogy as reasons for providing limited feedback, thereby deepening the interpretation of the statistical trend.
3. **Expansion of Quantitative Findings:** In some areas, the qualitative data served to expand or elaborate upon the quantitative results by providing additional dimensions not originally captured in the questionnaire. For instance, while the quantitative strand listed methods such as “dictation” and “essay writing” as commonly used, the interviews revealed the rationale behind these choices and the challenges teachers faced in implementing more interactive or student-centred approaches such as writing workshops.
4. **Clarification of Ambiguities:** In cases where the quantitative data revealed inconsistent patterns or lacked explanatory depth, qualitative findings helped clarify these ambiguities. For example, while the questionnaire data suggested moderate use of peer review, interviews clarified that although teachers value peer collaboration, they rarely implement it due to concerns over student discipline and uneven skill levels.
5. **Contextualization of Statistical Trends:** The integration allowed the researcher to situate the numerical data within the lived realities of students and teachers. This was particularly useful in understanding the extent to which factors such as lack of reading culture, inadequate instructional materials, and socio-economic background shaped students’ performance. Rather than viewing

these factors in isolation, the qualitative data contextualized them within the schooling environment of Central Tongu.

6. Final Synthesis for Reporting: The integration culminated in a narrative synthesis, where quantitative findings were presented alongside relevant qualitative quotations and interpretations in the discussion chapter. This synthesis not only provided corroboration but also enhanced the credibility of the study's conclusions through the validation of findings across multiple data sources.

Through this integrative process, the study achieved a holistic perspective on the issue of English composition proficiency. The combined data provided a fuller picture of the problem, offering both empirical patterns and practical insights, which are critical for informing policy, curriculum adjustments, and teacher training programmes in the Central Tongu District and similar educational contexts.

### **3.15 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were a fundamental aspect of this study to ensure the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process. First, an introductory letter was obtained from the Head of the Department of Basic Education at the University of Education, Winneba. This letter formally introduced the researcher and the purpose of the study, and it was presented to the District Education Directorate and the Headteachers of the selected Basic Schools within the District. The letter served as a formal request for permission to conduct the research and facilitated access to the schools.

Upon receiving administrative consent, the researcher arranged meetings with each Headteacher and relevant stakeholders to explain the nature, purpose, and significance

of the study. Informed consent was then sought from all participants. This involved clearly explaining the study's objectives, the procedures for data collection, the expected duration of their involvement, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were assured that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences or penalties.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, participants were not required to disclose any personal identifiers such as names or specific school affiliations in any written responses. Pseudonyms or codes were used during data transcription and analysis to protect individual identities. Data collected was stored securely and was only accessible to the researcher. No part of the data was shared with any third party, and the information provided was used solely for academic purposes.

Furthermore, participants were assured that their responses would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, and the findings would be reported in a way that would not allow individual participants or schools to be identified. The researcher also emphasized that the study posed minimal to no risk to the participants, and no form of deception was used at any stage of the research.

All ethical standards outlined by the University of Education, Winneba, and general principles of research ethics including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. The researcher maintained professional conduct and sensitivity, especially when dealing with issues that related to educational challenges, leadership, or inclusive education practices.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Overview

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the academic performance of Junior High School students in English Composition in the Central Tongu District. This chapter focuses on presenting and analyzing the data collected from participants in the schools involved in the study. The analysis and discussion are organized around the research questions guiding the study. The respondents included both pupils and teachers. To make sense of the data, statistical tools such as frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used. The chapter begins by outlining the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Following this, the research findings are shared in four sections, each corresponding to one of the research questions. The analysis throughout is structured according to these questions to provide clear insights into the study's results.

#### Research Questions

1. What are the factors responsible for low academic performance of JHS students in English composition in Central Tongu District?
2. What are the perceived effects of key factors (e.g., working conditions, indiscipline, late preparation) on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition writing in Central Tongu District?
3. Which techniques do English language teachers employ in teaching English composition skills in the Central Tongu District?
4. What are some of the strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of JHS students in English composition in the Central Tongu District?

#### 4.1 Response Rate

A total of three hundred and ninety (390) questionnaires comprising three hundred (300) for students and ninety (90) for English language teachers were administered, and all the questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. Therefore, the response rate for the researcher was 100% from both teachers and students. Generally, the study attained a response rate of 83.3%.

#### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This part of the chapter focuses on analyzing the demographic data of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Teachers)**

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	60
	Female	36	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	20-31	45	52
	31-40	27	30
	41-50	9	10
	51 above	7	8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
Professional Qualification	Diploma	46	52
	Degree	34	36
	Masters	10	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
Rank	Snr. Sup	36	40
	Sup	10	12
	Prin. Sup	32	36
	Ass. Dir II	10	12
	Ass. Dir I	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
Experience	Below 5 years	45	50
	5-10 years	27	30
	11-16 years	9	15
	Above 16 years	4	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2022

It can be observed from Table 4.1 that from the teacher respondents 54 (60%) were males while 36 (40%), were females. The age distribution of the teachers disclosed that teachers who were between 20-31 years were 45 (52 %), and those between 31-40 years were 27 (30%). Also, teachers with ages between 41-50 years were 9 (10%) while those above 50 years was 7 (8%). Academic qualifications of the teachers revealed that 46 (52%) had diploma whereas 34 (36%) had bachelor degree. Those with Master's Degree recorded 10 (12%) respectively

Table 4 again, showed that 36(40%) of the respondents reported being at the Senior Superintendent rank as compared to those who are Superintendent 10 (12%). Also, 32 (36%) were Principal Superintendent, Assistant Director II, 10(12%). With respect to the years of teaching experience, the data revealed that a larger portion 45 (50%) of the respondents had spent between 1-5 years while 27(30%) of the teachers reported to have spent between 5-10 years in teaching. In addition, 9 (15%) of the teachers reported to have spent 11-16 years. Finally, 4(5%) have experience for over 16 years. The demographic makeup of the respondents aligns well with that of the entire population, indicating a fair depiction of the target group This information enhances the credibility and generalizability of the study findings.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Students**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Form of Students	JHS 1	65	21.8
	JHS 2	110	36.8
	JHS 3	125	41.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Gender of Students	Male	161	53.8
	Female	139	46.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Parental Level of Education	JHS	159	53.0
	SHS	60	19.8
	Tertiary	41	13.8
	No Education	40	13.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age of Students	11-15 Years	192	64.0
	16-18 Years	90	30.2
	Above 18	18	5.8
	Years	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>		

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

It could be observed from Table 4.2 that 65 (21.8%) students were in JHS 1, 110 (36.8%) were in JHS 2, while 125 (41.4%) students were in JHS 3. The gender distribution revealed that 161 (53.8%) students were males and 139 (46.2%) were females. Also, the parental level of education revealed that 159 (53.0%) of the parents were JHS graduates, 60 (19.8%) had SHS certificates while 41 (13.8%) and 40 (13.4%) had tertiary and no education respectively. The age distribution of the students showed that students who were between 11-15 years 192 (64.0%) those between 16-18 years were 90 (30.2%) and students above 18 years were 18 (5.8%). This gender distribution is relevant to understanding the representation of males and females in the teaching profession within the context of the study. Ingersoll and Merrill (2017) found that the teaching employees has historically been predominantly female, with the proportion of male teachers. The age distribution suggests a relatively young teaching workforce, with a significant proportion of early-career teachers. This aligns with the observations made by Darling-Hammond and Sykes

(1999) regarding the increasing influx of early-career teachers in recent decades. This information is useful in understanding the overall educational background and professional preparation of the teaching staff. The breakdown provides insights into the hierarchical structure and seniority levels within the teaching workforce. This hierarchical structure within the teaching workforce is consistent with the organizational structures observed in many educational systems, as described by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) in their work on school leadership and management. The range of teaching experience represented in the sample can be useful in understanding the mix of novice and experienced teachers. The detailed demographic analysis provided offers valuable insights into the characteristics of the teacher sample, which can inform discussions and interpretations related to the study's context, findings, and implications.

#### **4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis of Research Questions**

Data analysis involved using frequency counts and calculating the percentages of responses to compare how students and teachers answered the various items. To simplify the analysis, responses of “strongly agree” and “agree” were grouped together as favorable, while “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were combined as unfavorable. This approach follows the recommendation by Best and Kahn (1995), who suggest that when using a Likert scale, it is acceptable to report percentage responses by merging the two extreme categories for clarity and ease of presentation.

#### **Research Question 1: What are the factors responsible for low academic performance of JHS students in English composition in Central Tongu District?**

Research Question 1 sought to investigate the views of students and teachers on the factors accounting for students' low academic performance in English Composition of

the Central Tongu District. Table 4.3 presents a summary of their views on the factors.

**Table 4.3: Factors responsible for low academic performance in English composition**

<b>Responses (Students)</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>
School infrastructure and facilities such as school building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning.	23 7.6%	27 9%	198 66%	52 17.3%	3.87	1.32
The school environment encourages teachers to teach.	78 26%	42 14%	121 40%	59 19.7%	3.10	1.29
Most teachers do not have adequate knowledge of their subject matter.	23 7.7%	12 4%	215 71.7%	50 16.7%	3.45	1.33
Teachers always complete the syllabuses for the classes taught the previous year.	79 26.3%	87 29%	123 41%	11 3.6%	3.21	1.39
Unruly student behaviour affects their academic performance.	129 43%	89 26.7%	59 19.7%	23 7.7%	3.41	1.35
Lack of Professional support – psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour and performance.	157 52.3%	40 13.3%	89 26.7%	14 4.7%	3.40	1.42
Parental Support	74 24.6%	88 29.3%	90 30%	48 16%	3.21	1.36
Learning Resources available at Home	120 40%	74 24.7%	41 16%	65 21.7%	3.33	1.26
<b>Teachers' Response</b>						
School infrastructure and facilities such as school building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning.	51 56.7%	21 23.3%	12 13.3%	6 6.7%	3.25	1.41
The school environment encourages teachers to teach.	51 56.7%	21 23.3%	12 13.3%	6 6.7%	3.45	1.36
Most teachers do not have	0	0	80	10	3.40	1.41

adequate knowledge of their subject matter.	0%	0%	88.9%	11.1%		
Teachers always complete the syllabuses for the classes taught the previous year.	11 12.2%	14 15.6%	60 66.7%	5 5.6%	3.43	1.32
Unruly student behaviour affects their academic performance.	47 52.2%	43 47.8%	0 0%	0 0%	3.44	1.38
Lack of Professional support - psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour and performance.	47 52.2%	43 47.8%	0 0%	0 0%	3.46	1.56
Parental Support	54 60%	30 33.3%	6 6.6%	0 0%	3.23	1.34
Learning Resources at home	56 62.2%	30 33.3%	4 4.4%	0 0%	3.2	1.42

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

*Key: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; WM = Weighted mean; SD. = Standard Deviation*

As indicated in Table 4.3 above, it can be observed that the majority of the students 198 representing 66% disagree that school infrastructure and facilities such as building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to support teaching and learning. Again, 17.3% of the students' respondents also strongly disagreed, 7.6% agreed and 9% strongly agreed. This accession aligns with Barry (2005) which assumes the position that the type of school one attends has a major influence in predetermining the academic success and educational attainment of the student. The type of school one attends is the institutional environment which marks the perimeter of a student's academic life. Based on the environment, one may shut down or open the doors leading to academic triumph. (Sprinthall cited in Basil, 2007) also recognize that a learning environment that is free from obstructions, impediments or distractions like noise, gas or smoke pollution can create health risks, which in turn affect or reduce the student's focus or conceptual concentration to learning. Similar findings have been reported in the research literature on school facilities and their

impacts on teaching and learning. The findings of this study are consistent with Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) who found that the physical condition of school facilities, including the condition of buildings, lighting, and other facilities, can be a key factor in student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Additionally, Earthman and Lemasters (2009) conducted a review of research on the relationship between school facilities and student outcomes, and they determined that the physical condition of school buildings and the quality of resources available can have a significant influence on student learning, behavior, and overall academic achievement. Furthermore, Schneider (2002) revealed that poor school facilities, such as inadequate or outdated buildings, can negatively affect students' motivation, attendance, and overall educational experiences. The author argued that providing well-maintained and modernized school infrastructure is crucial for creating a supportive learning environment.

When this same question about school infrastructure and facilities such as school building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning was posed to the teachers, 56.7% agreed while 23.3% strongly agreed, 13.3% disagreed and 6.7% strongly disagreed.

With regards to the school environment encouraging teachers to teach, students' views were sought. Majority of the students constituted 40% disagreed, 26% agreed, 19.7% strongly disagreed and 14% strongly agreed. The weighted mean score of (3.87) and the standard deviation score of (1.32) indicate that students' response on the statement was high. Students' views were again sought on whether most teachers do not have adequate knowledge of their subject matter. Many students believe that teachers have adequate knowledge. This resulted in 215 students representing 71.7%.

Also, 50 respondents representing 16.7% strongly disagreed, 7.7% have agreed to this accession and 4% have strongly agreed. Comparatively, majority of students (66%) disagreed that the school infrastructure and facilities were in good condition to enhance teaching and learning, while the majority of teachers (56.7%) agreed that the infrastructure and facilities were in good condition. This contrast in perceptions between students and teachers is echoed in the literature. For instance, a study by Earthman and Lemasters (2009) found that students tended to have a more negative perception of school facilities compared to their teachers.

Students have again answered question on whether teachers always complete the syllabuses for the classes taught the previous year. According to the table above, 123 students representing 41% disagreed, 29% strongly agreed, 26.3% agreed and finally, 11 students representing 3.6% have strongly disagreed. Commenting whether unruly students' behaviour affects their academic performance, 129 students (52.2%) have agreed and the rest of the students 89 (26.7%) strongly agreed, 19.7% disagreed, and 7.7% strongly disagreed with this accession. The data indicates that a majority of both students (52.2%) and teachers (100%) agreed that unruly student behaviour affects academic performance. This finding is consistent with the extensive research on the impact of student behaviour on learning outcomes. Scholars like Marzano (2003) and Sugai and Horner (2002) have highlighted the crucial role of positive behavioural support and classroom management strategies in enhancing student engagement and academic achievement.

With the question of lack of professional support – psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour and performance, 157 (52.3%) agreed, 40 (13.3%) strongly agreed, 89 (26.7%) disagreed and 14 (4.7%) have strongly disagreed. The passage

reveals that both students (52.3%) and teachers (100%) agreed that the lack of professional support, such as psychologists and counselors, affects student behaviour and performance. This aligns with the findings of studies that have emphasized the importance of providing comprehensive student support services in schools. For example, Adelman and Taylor (2006) have advocated for the integration of mental health services and school-based interventions to address barriers to learning.

Again, commenting on the issue of parental support for their studies, 90 (30%) have strongly disagreed that there is no parental support for their studies. This in the opinion of the researcher is because of the high level of illiteracy among the parents. Parents with no education is 13.4% and those with Basic education is 54%. The finding indicates that a significant proportion of students (30%) strongly disagreed that there is parental support for their studies, which the researcher attributes to the high level of parental illiteracy. This finding is consistent with the literature on the relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement. Researchers like Epstein (2001) and Jeynes (2005) have highlighted the positive impact of parental engagement and support on students' educational outcomes.

Finally, concerning the learning resources at home, 120 (40%) have agreed, 74 (24.7%) strongly agreed, 65 (21.7%) strongly disagreed and 41 (16%) disagreed that there are no learning resources at home. The weighted mean is 3.33 and the standard deviation is 1.26. This shows that there is high level response. The passage reports that a majority of students (64.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that there are no learning resources at home, while a majority of teachers (95.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be learning resources at home. This disparity in perspectives can be understood in the context of the research on the importance of access to educational

resources, both at school and at home, for student learning. Authors like Hattie (2008) and OECD (2010) have emphasized the significance of providing adequate learning resources to support student achievement.

In the questionnaire, the same level of questions was posted to the teachers for their response. On whether school infrastructure and facilities are in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning, 51 (56.7%) of the teachers agreed to the statement while 21 (23.3%) of the teachers strongly agreed with 12 (13.3%) of the teachers disagreed and 6 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of (3.32) and standard deviation score of (1.29) confirms that teachers' response to the statement was high.

Moreover, the results in Table 4 disclosed that 51 (56.7%) of the teachers agreed that the school environment is encouraging enough to assist teachers to teach while 21 (23.3%) teachers strongly agreed to the statement with 12 (13.3%) of the teachers disagreed. The mean (3.45) and standard deviation (1.36) were an indication that teachers' response was high.

Besides, 80 (88.9%) of the teachers disagreed that most teachers do not have adequate knowledge of their subject matter while 10 (11.1%) teachers strongly disagreed. Results from teachers' views on completing the syllabuses for the classes taught the previous year. It has been revealed that 60 (66.7%) of the teachers disagreed, 11(12.2%) agreed and 14 (15.6%) strongly disagreed Results from the mean (3.43) and standard deviation (1.32) were an indication that teachers response was high.

Moreover, all teachers have agreed 47 (52.2%) and strongly agreed 43 (47.8%) that unruly student behaviour affects their academic performance. Reacting to the question lack of Professional support - psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour

and performance, 47 (52.2%) of the teachers agreed and the rest of the teachers 443 (47.8%) strongly agreed to this accession. Many teachers 54 (60%) and 30 (33.3%) have both agreed and strongly agreed respectively to lack of parental support.

Finally, the result in table 4.3 disclosed that 56 (62.2%) and 30 (33.3%) agreed and strongly agreed that there should be learning resources at home. The weighted mean (3.22) and standard deviation of (1.42) were an indication that teachers' response was high.

It can be deduced from the data presented that even though students' and teachers' responses to the items seems to be high there were differences with respect to their perception on the statements. The data suggest that unruly students' behaviour, lack of parental support and facilities such as water and electricity supply to the schools appears to be a challenge in the district. It is worth knowing that, these facilities are very significant in making the school more habitable and their absence will not affect students' performance but also quality of education in the district.

#### **4.4 Qualitative Analysis**

Based on the results from the quantitative strand (Table 6) of the study, the following is a detailed qualitative analysis aligned with Research Question 1: What are the factors responsible for low academic performance of JHS students in English composition in Central Tongu District? This section uses thematic qualitative insights from interviews with teachers and students to explain and elaborate on the patterns observed in the quantitative data, in line with the sequential explanatory design of the mixed methods study.

### **a. Inadequate School Infrastructure and Learning Environment**

While a significant proportion of teachers (56.7%) agreed that school infrastructure was generally in good condition, a majority of students (66%) disagreed. This contrast highlights a critical disparity in perceptions. Interviews with students revealed concerns about insufficient library resources, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of basic facilities like electricity and potable water, especially in rural schools.

One student stated:

*“We don’t have enough textbooks or a good place to study after school. Our classroom is always hot and noisy, so it’s hard to concentrate when writing essays.”*

Teachers, although somewhat more optimistic in their responses, acknowledged that the absence of dedicated writing rooms, functioning libraries, and reliable electricity affects how effectively writing lessons can be delivered.

A teacher emphasized:

*“We often improvise during composition lessons because there are no materials. Most of the schools lack functioning libraries, and students hardly see good model essays.”*

This supports the quantitative findings that, although infrastructure is partially available, its quality and relevance for teaching English composition are inadequate, particularly from the students' perspective.

### **b. Unconducive Teaching Environment and Discipline Issues**

Both students and teachers highlighted unruly student behaviour as a major challenge, with high agreement levels (Students: 43% SA, 26.7% A; Teachers: 52.2% SA, 47.8% A). Interview data corroborated this, with several teachers citing poor student attitudes, truancy, and limited classroom discipline as barriers to effective writing instruction.

One teacher noted:

*“Even when you introduce interesting writing topics, some students simply refuse to participate. They are not motivated, and some disrupt others who are willing to learn.”*

Students, in turn, mentioned that classroom distractions and lack of motivation from peers affected their ability to focus on tasks like writing, which require concentration and guidance.

### **c. Lack of Professional Support Services**

Both students and teachers agreed prodigiously that the absence of psychologists and counsellors negatively impacts students' academic performance. This theme emerged strongly in interviews, where teachers lamented the lack of psychosocial support for students dealing with emotional, behavioural, or family-related issues.

A teacher remarked:

*“We are not trained counsellors, but some students face difficult home situations that affect their learning. We need professionals to help them cope so they can concentrate on school.”*

This qualitative insight deepens our understanding of how emotional distress and behavioural problems, often unnoticed in quantitative summaries, affect students' writing output and engagement.

### **d. Parental Support and Home Learning Resources**

Although the quantitative data suggested moderate agreement on the availability of parental support and learning resources, the interviews revealed gaps in actual home involvement. Students reported that most parents do not assist with homework and often lack the literacy skills needed to provide meaningful support.

A student shared:

*“My parents always tell me to go and study, but they can’t help me when I don’t understand something. They didn’t go to school much themselves.”*

Teachers also confirmed that parental engagement in composition tasks is low, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged areas.

*“Many parents here focus more on farming or trading. Education is not a top priority for them. Their children hardly read or write at home.”*

This reinforces the survey’s indication that socioeconomic factors and low parental literacy hinder students’ writing development.

#### **e. Completion of Syllabus and Teacher Competence**

While the majority of teachers (66.7%) and a fair number of students (41%) disagreed that syllabi were always completed, qualitative responses added depth. Teachers cited large class sizes, work overload, and frequent absenteeism of students and teachers as reasons for this challenge.

In one teacher's words:

*“There’s never enough time to finish everything in the syllabus. Writing takes time to teach and assess. We focus more on grammar and comprehension because they’re easier to manage.”*

On teacher competence, while 88.9% of teachers rejected the claim that they lacked content knowledge, some students still perceived a gap in teaching methods and delivery.

A student commented:

*“Sometimes we don’t understand how to write good essays because our teacher just gives us a topic and asks us to write. No examples or steps are given.”*

This suggests that while teachers may have the required knowledge, instructional strategies may not be effective or student-centred, especially in teaching writing as a process.

The interviews provided vital insights into the contextual realities behind the numbers. They explained why students disagreed with teachers on infrastructure adequacy, confirmed discipline and support issues, clarified the limitations of home learning environments, and elaborated on teaching practices. The qualitative findings thus enhanced and validated the quantitative results by illustrating how and why the identified factors influence low performance in English composition.

**Research Question 2: What are the perceived effects of key factors (e.g., working conditions, indiscipline, late preparation) on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition writing in Central Tongu District?**

Research Question 2 sought to investigate the views of students and teachers on the perceived effects of key factors (e.g., working conditions, indiscipline, late preparation) on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition writing in Central Tongu District . Table 4.4 below presents a summary of their views.

**Table 4.4: Perceived effects of key factors on JHS students' low proficiency in English composition in the Central Tongu**

Statement STUDENTS)	SA (/%)	A (/%)	D (/%)	SD (%)	W M	SD	Effect Level
Unfavorable working conditions cause teachers not to give their best	85 (94.4%)	5 (5.6%)	0	0	3.9 4	0.2 2	High
Indiscipline students perform well in exams	15 (16.7%)	3 (3.3%)	59 (65.6%)	13 (14.4%)	2.2 8	0.9 6	Low
BECE English performance is encouraging	24 (26.7%)	10 (11.1%)	50 (55.6%)	6 (6.7%)	2.6 1	0.9 9	Low
Late preparation for BECE	85 (94.4%)	5 (5.6%)	0	0	3.9 4	0.2 2	High
Inadequate time for revision	69 (76.7%)	18 (20.0%)	3 (3.3%)	0	3.7	0.5	High
Poor role models at home	36 (40.0%)	15 (16.7%)	30 (33.3%)	9 (10.0%)	2.9 9	1.1	Moderate
Statement (TEACHERS)	SA (/%)	A (/%)	D (/%)	SD (%)	W M	SD	Effect Level
Unfavorable working conditions cause teachers not to give their best	230 (76.6%)	65 (21.6%)	5 (1.6%)	0	3.7 5	0.4 4	High
Indiscipline students perform well in exams	5 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	256 (85.3%)	39 (13.0%)	1.7 2	0.4 3	Low
BECE English performance is encouraging	40 (13.3%)	32 (10.6%)	221 (73.6%)	7 (2.3%)	2.0 9	0.5 1	Low
Late preparation for BECE	256 (85.0%)	44 (14.6%)	0	0	3.8 5	0.3 7	High
Inadequate time for revision	256 (85.0%)	20 (6.6%)	22 (7.3%)	0	3.7 8	0.4 4	High
Poor role models at home	189 (63.0%)	35 (11.6%)	76 (25.3%)	0	3.3 8	0.4 8	High

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

Key: *SA* = Strongly Agree; *A* = Agree; *D* = Disagree; *SD* = Strongly Disagree; *WM* = Weighted mean; *SD*. = Standard Deviation. **NB: Reverse-coded statements (disagreement confirms negative effects/low proficiency). High agreement on core factors validates your research question on effects.**

It is observed from the data in Table 4.4 that majority of the students, 230 (76.6%) students agreed that unfavorable working conditions causing teacher not to give out their best while 65 (21.6%) of the students strongly agreed. This statement indicates that almost all the students have realized that due to unfavorable working condition have made teachers to relax in giving their best. 5 (1.6%) students disagreed about this statement and their weighted mean score (3.41) and standard deviation score (1.44) indicating that their responses to the statement was high.

In addition to unfavorable working conditions, causing teachers not to give out their best, students' views were also sought on whether indiscipline students in the school perform well in exams. The results revealed that 256 (85.3%) students disagreed. This is emphatic answer that indiscipline students don't perform well in exams.

Moreover, the results revealed that 221 (73.6%) students disagreed to the statement students' performance in English Language in B.E.C.E. is encouraging, while 40 (13.3%) students agreed to the statement with 32 (10.6%) students strongly agreed on the statement. The weighted mean score (3.22) and standard deviation score (1.54) showed that their responses were high on the statement.

Commenting on whether late preparation of students for B.E.C.E. affects the students' performance, 256 (85%) of the students agreed to the statement while 44 (14.6%) strongly agreed to the statement. Weighted mean score of (3.33) and standard deviation score of (1.10) indicate that students' responses on the statement was high.

Again, students commented on their inadequate time for revision, 256 (85%) of the students agreed to the statement while 20 (6.6%) strongly agreed to the statement with 22 (7.3%) of the students disagreed to the statement. Mean score of (3.45) and

standard deviation score of (1.32) indicate that students' responses on the statement was high.

Finally, students were asked to respond to whether they have role models at home 189 (63%) of the students agreed to the statement while 20 (6.6%) strongly agreed to the statement with 22 (7.3%) of the students disagreed. Weighted mean score of (3.52) and standard deviation score of (1.32) indicate that students' responses on the statement was high.

Furthermore, the same questions were given to the teachers to answer. Teachers' views were sought on how unfavorable working conditions causing teachers not to give out their best. The results were elaborated in the table 5 above. It has been revealed that 85 (94.4%) of the students agreed to the statement and 5 (5.6%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement. The weighted mean score of (3.65) and standard deviation of (1.78) is an indication that teachers' responses were high.

On whether indiscipline students in your school perform well in exams, 59 (65.6%) of the teachers disagreed to the statement while 15 (16.7%) of the students agreed to the statement with 13(14.4%) of the students being strongly disagreed, while 3 (3.3%) strongly agreed to this statement.

Again, teachers' views were also sought on whether students' performance in English Language in B.E.C.E. is encouraging. It has been disclosed that 50 (55.6%) of the teachers disagreed to the fact that students' performance in English Language in B.E.C.E. is encouraging, while 6 (6.7%) of the teachers strongly disagreed to the statement with 24 (26.7%) of the teachers agreed and 10 (11.1%) strongly agreed to

the statement. The weighted mean score of (3.65) and standard deviation score of (1.65) demonstrate that teachers' responses were low.

On whether there is late preparation of students for B.E.C.E, 85 (94.4%) of the teachers agreed to the statement while 5 (5.6%) of the teachers strongly agreed. The mean score of (3.65) and standard deviation score of (1.65) confirms that teachers' response to the statement was high.

Results from teachers views on inadequate time for revision revealed that 69 (76.7%) of the teachers agreed that there is inadequate time for revision while 18 (20%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement. Results from the weighted mean (3.55) and standard deviation (1.66) were an indication that teachers' response was high.

Finally, teachers were asked to comment on students having role models at home, 36 (40%) agreed to the statement, with 15 (16.7%) strongly agreeing to the statement. Again, 30 (33.3%) of the students disagreed and 9 (10%) strongly disagreed. the result of the statement revealed a weighted mean of (2.12) and standard deviation of (2.11). This shows that the response is very low.

On the effect, both students and teachers rated unfavorable working conditions, late BECE preparation, and inadequate revision time as high effect factors ( $WM \geq 3.40$ ), indicating strong consensus on their substantial negative impact on JHS English composition proficiency. Unfavorable working conditions (students  $WM=3.75$ ; teachers  $WM=3.94$ ) demotivate teachers, reducing feedback quality and lesson preparation core drivers of writing skill deficits. Late preparation ( $WM=3.85-3.94$ ) and inadequate revision ( $WM=3.70-3.78$ ) exacerbate this by limiting practice time, directly correlating with poor composition scores as students rush without mastery.

Only teachers rated poor home role models as a moderate effect factor (WM=2.99), while students saw it higher (WM=3.38); this suggests inconsistent influence depending on respondent perspective. Teachers' balanced view (40% SA, 33% D) implies home environments provide partial support but fail to reinforce school-taught composition skills like structure and vocabulary. This moderation highlights the need for family involvement strategies, though it's less dominant than school-based issues.

Low effect ratings (WM <2.60–2.80) emerged for indiscipline and BECE performance statements (reverse-coded), confirming minimal positive impact and underscoring pervasive low proficiency. Both groups strongly disagreed that indisciplined students excel (students WM=1.72; teachers WM=2.28), yet indiscipline indirectly amplifies other factors by disrupting classes. Similarly, rejection of "encouraging BECE performance" (students WM=2.09; teachers WM=2.61) validates the problem's severity, prioritizing systemic fixes over behavioral myths.

The study presents extensive findings from both student and teacher perspectives on various factors that may influence student academic performance, such as teachers' working conditions, student discipline, preparation for exams, and access to role models at home.

The findings indicate that the majority of students (76.6%) and teachers (94.4%) agreed that unfavorable working conditions cause teachers not to give their best. This aligns with the research on the impact of teacher working conditions on their job satisfaction, motivation, and effectiveness. Scholars like Ingersoll (2001) and Johnson et al. (2012) have highlighted the importance of providing teachers with adequate resources, support, and positive working environments to ensure they can perform at their best and positively influence student outcomes.

The passage reveals that the majority of students (85.3%) disagreed that undisciplined students perform well in exams, which is supported by the findings of studies on the relationship between student behaviour and academic achievement. Authors like Marzano (2003) and Sugai and Horner (2002) have emphasized the importance of effective classroom management and positive behavioural support in fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes.

It was also noted that the majority of students (73.6%) and teachers (55.6%) disagreed that students' performance in English Language in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is encouraging. This finding aligns with the broader literature on the challenges faced by students in developing proficiency in English, particularly in contexts where it is not the primary language of instruction. Researchers like Cummins (1979) and Brock-Utne (2007) have explored the complexities of language-related barriers to learning in educational settings.

The study reveals that the majority of students (85%) and teachers (94.4%) agreed that late preparation for the BECE affects students' performance. Additionally, the majority of students (85%) and teachers (76.7%) agreed that there is inadequate time for revision. These findings resonate with the literature on the importance of timely and sufficient preparation for high-stakes examinations, as highlighted by scholars like Harlen and Crick (2003) and Madaus and Russell (2010).

The finding indicates that the majority of students (63%) agreed that they have role models at home, while the majority of teachers (43.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This discrepancy in perception may be related to the broader research on the influence of family and home environment on student development and academic outcomes. Authors like Benner and Mistry (2007) and

Jeynes (2005) have explored the role of parental involvement and access to positive role models in supporting student success.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

The responses to Research Question 2 revealed a strong convergence between students and teachers that the identified factors do not just exist but also significantly contribute to students' poor performance in English composition. Through qualitative interviews, the study uncovered nuanced details that expand and explain the extent of these influences, offering deeper insight into how and why each factor operates within the educational context of Central Tongu.

#### **a. Unfavorable Working Conditions of Teachers**

Quantitatively, 98.2% of students and 100% of teachers agreed that poor working conditions affect teachers' ability to give their best. In the interviews, teachers expressed frustration over large class sizes, lack of teaching resources, irregular salary payments, and limited professional development opportunities. These realities not only reduce motivation but also hinder the ability to invest time in planning and delivering effective writing instruction.

One teacher commented:

*“With over fifty students in a class, no markers, no teaching guides, and no electricity sometimes, how can we effectively teach essay writing which requires individualized attention?”*

This reflects the high agreement levels and supports the idea that unfavorable working conditions directly reduce instructional quality and teacher commitment, especially in writing-intensive subjects like English composition.

### **b. Indiscipline among Students**

Quantitative data showed 85.3% of students and 65.6% of teachers disagreed with the idea that indisciplined students perform well. During the interviews, both groups linked poor academic performance to truancy, lateness, disrespect, and a lack of classroom focus. Students reported that distractions from disruptive peers significantly reduced their concentration during writing lessons, while teachers emphasized the difficulty in maintaining discipline during writing tasks, which require quiet and sustained attention.

A teacher noted:

*“Sometimes, just when you want students to write quietly, some start walking about or talking. It breaks the concentration of others who are serious.”*

This confirms that indiscipline not only disrupts teaching but has a direct negative effect on students’ writing productivity and test performance.

### **c. Low Academic Performance in B.E.C.E. English Language Component**

Both teachers and students acknowledged the discouraging performance in English at the BECE level, with over 73% of students and 55.6% of teachers disagreeing that the performance is satisfactory. Interviews with teachers attributed this poor performance specifically to the composition writing component, citing students’ weak grammar, spelling issues, and poor organizational skills.

A teacher explained:

*“The students fail composition not because they don’t try but because they lack the foundational skills. They don’t read enough to write well.”*

This finding aligns with the quantitative result and reinforces the argument that low performance in English composition is a major contributor to overall poor BECE English scores.

#### **d. Late Preparation for BECE**

A significant proportion of respondents (85% of students, 94.4% of teachers) believed that late preparation for BECE contributes to low composition scores. During interviews, students expressed concerns that most composition practice is postponed until the final term of JHS 3, leaving little time for effective writing development.

One student stated:

*“We only started writing compositions regularly when we reached JHS 3. Before that, we mostly did grammar exercises.”*

Teachers also admitted that writing activities are sometimes neglected until exam season, a result of time constraints and syllabus overload. This insight confirms that poor planning and delayed instruction on composition writing reduce students' readiness for national assessments.

#### **e. Inadequate Time for Revision**

There was also strong agreement that inadequate revision time is a key factor, with 85% of students and 76.7% of teachers affirming this. Interview responses showed that revision of writing, especially through peer review and feedback, was rarely practiced due to tight academic schedules. Teachers revealed that only one or two model essays are revised before BECE.

A teacher shared:

*“We revise one or two compositions, but that's not enough. Writing needs practice and feedback. Without time, we just move on.”*

This explanation supports the quantitative data and emphasizes that effective writing instruction requires time for iterative practice, something currently lacking in many schools.

#### **f. Presence (or Absence) of Role Models at Home**

The responses about the influence of role models at home were slightly mixed. While 63% of students saw the presence of role models as beneficial, 33.3% of teachers disagreed. Interviews revealed that many students lack literate role models, particularly those who can guide them in academic matters such as reading or writing at home.

A student mentioned:

*“My parents tell me to study but they don’t understand English. Sometimes I ask questions, but they can’t help.”*

Teachers reiterated this by noting that homes with low parental literacy and no visible academic support systems tend to produce students who struggle with composition tasks. The qualitative responses therefore deepen the understanding of how social background and home environment contribute to performance challenges.

The integration of qualitative interview data with the quantitative responses from Table 7 confirms that the identified factors; unfavorable working conditions, indiscipline, delayed BECE preparation, inadequate revision, and limited role models at home not only exist but significantly hinder students’ development in English composition. The interviews helped explain how and why these factors operate with such impact, emphasizing the need for structural, instructional, and socio-cultural interventions. This integrated analysis strengthens the credibility and depth of the findings and supports the pragmatist paradigm underlying the study where both

objective measurement (quantitative) and subjective interpretation (qualitative) contribute to a richer understanding of educational realities in Central Tongu.

**Research Question 3: Which techniques do English language teachers employ in teaching English composition skills in the Central Tongu District?**

To answer this question, the study employed a triangulated approach, drawing on data from questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The quantitative data provided a broad overview of the instructional methods frequently used by teachers, while the qualitative interviews and observation sessions offered deeper insights into how these techniques were implemented and the contextual factors influencing their use. The results are presented in Table 4.5.



**Table 4.5: Methods used by the teachers in teaching English Composition in the Central Tongu District**

<b>Students' Response</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>
Question and answer	189 63%	59 19.6%	52 17.3%	0 0	3.45	1.54
Group work	242 80.7%	58 19.3%	0 0%	0 0%	3.44	1.36
Debate/ Argumentation	35 11.7%	20 6.7%	200 66.7%	45 15%	3.50	1.45
Lecture	190 63.3%	87 29%	20 6.7%	3 1%	3.42	1.36
Dramatization	10 3.3%	12 4%	240 80%	38 12.7%	3.54	1.36
Group discussion	140 46.7%	89 26.7%	51 17%	10 3.3%	3.44	1.35
Role play	0 0%	0 0%	259 86.3%	41 13.7	3.55	1.46
<b>Teachers' Response</b>						
Question and answer	59 45.6%	27 30%	4 4.4%	0 0%	3.33	1.45
Group work	56 62.2%	30 33.3%	4 4.4%	0 0%	3.36	1.53
Debate	20 22.2%	49 54.4%	15 16.7%	6 6.7%	3.53	1.22
Lecture	85 94.4%	3 3.3%	2 2.2%	0 0%	3.54	1.36
Dramatization	2 2.2%	0 0%	80 88.9%	8 8.9%	3.45	1.45
Group discussion	85 94.4%	5 5.5	0 0%	0 0%	3.43	1.35
Role play	5 5.5%	2 2.2%	83 92.2%	0 0%	3.41	1.35

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

Key: *SA* = Strongly Agree; *A* = Agree; *D* = Disagree; *SD* = Strongly Disagree; *WM* = Weighted mean; *SD*. = Standard Deviation.

The results in Table 4.5 reveals students' responses to the statement were very high.

For example, on whether the teacher use question and answer method, 189 (63%) of

the students agreed to the statement while 59 (19.6%) of the students strongly agreed to the statement with 52 (17.3%) disagreed with the statement. The weighted mean score of (3.45) and standard deviation score of (1.54). Among the methods, students were also asked whether their teachers use group work and the results revealed that 242 (80.7%) of the students agreed to the statement while 58 (19.3%) strongly agreed to the statement. With a mean score of (3.44) and standard deviation value of (1.36) is an indication that the students' responses were very high to the statement.

Students' views were also sought on whether their teachers use debate method to teach and the results disclosed that 35(11.7%) students agreed to the statement while 20 (6.7%) strongly agreed to the statement. However, majority of the students disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement with 200 (66.7%) and 45 (15%) respectively. Responding to whether the teacher use lecture method, the results revealed that 190 (63.3%) of the students agreed to the statement while 87 (29%) of them strongly agreed to the statement with 20 (6.7%) disagreed and 3 (1%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of (3.42) and standard deviation value of (1.36) shows that students responses were low implying that most teachers in their school have use lecture method in teaching. Again, students were asked to react to whether dramatization is used by the teachers, the result shows that many of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with 240 (80%) and 38 (12.7%) respectively. The rest are 10 (3.3%) and 12 (4%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

Students again were asked to react to whether teachers use group discussion as a method in teaching, the result shows that 140 (46.7%) and 89 (26.7%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively with 51 (17%) and 10 (3.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, on whether teachers use role play, all the students

have disagreed and strongly disagreed to this statement with 259 (86.3%) and 41 (13.7%). Weighted mean and standard deviation scores of 3.55 and 1.46 clearly show that students' responses were very high.

Teachers' views were also sought on this research question and the results are contained in Table 6. For instance, reacting to whether they (teachers) use question and answer method in teaching 59 (45.6%) of the teachers agreed to the statement while 27 (30%) strongly agreed to the statement with 4 (4.4%) disagreed. The weighted mean and standard deviation scores of 3.33 and 1.45 shows that teachers' response to the statement were high. Again, 56 (62.2%) of the teachers agreed that they use group work while 30 (33.3%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement with 4 (4.4%) of the teachers disagreed. The mean score of (3.53) and standard deviation score of (1.22) disclosed that teachers' response to the statement were high.

Also, 49 (54.4%) teachers strongly agreed that they use debate method in teaching while 20 (22.2%) disagreed to the statement with 15 (16.7%) disagreed and 6 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The weighted mean and standard deviation scores of 3.53 and 1.22 revealed that teachers' response were high.

On whether teachers teach by using lecture method, 85 (94.4%) of the teachers agreed to the statement, 3 (3.3%) strongly agreed with only 2 (2.2%) of the teachers disagreed to the statement. Results from the weighted mean (43.54) and standard deviation (1.36) were an indication that teachers' response was high. Teachers view were again sort to find out whether they use dramatization method in teaching, result revealed that only 2 (2.2%) agreed that they use the dramatization with the rest 80 (88.9%) and 8 (8.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Furthermore, 85

(94.4%) and 5 (5.5%) of the teachers have agreed and strongly agreed that they use group discussion method in teaching.

Finally, 83 (92.2%) of the teachers disagreed that they use role play in teaching. Only 5 (5.5%) and 2 (2.2%) agreed and strongly agreed. The weighted mean (3.41) and standard deviation (1.35) were an indication that teachers' response was high.

The findings provide detailed insights into the teaching methods employed by teachers and the perceptions of both students and teachers on the use of these methods. The results indicate that both students (82.6%) and teachers (75.6%) agreed that the question-and-answer method is used in teaching. This aligns with the recommendations of educational researchers like Dillon (1988) and Rowe (1986), who have emphasized the importance of using questioning strategies to engage students, promote critical thinking, and assess their understanding. The finding reveals that a majority of students (80.7%) and teachers (95.5%) agreed that group work is used in teaching. This finding is consistent with the extensive research on the benefits of cooperative learning and group-based instruction, as highlighted by scholars such as Johnson and Johnson (1999) and Slavin (1995). These studies have shown that group work can enhance student engagement, learning, and social skills development. The results indicate that while a significant number of teachers (54.4%) agreed that they use the debate method, only a small percentage of students (18.4%) reported its use. This discrepancy may suggest differences in the actual implementation or perception of the debate method between teachers and students. Authors like Kuhn and Udell (2003) have explored the educational value of debates in promoting argumentation skills and critical thinking. The result shows that the majority of both students (92.3%) and teachers (97.7%) agreed that the lecture method

is used in teaching. This finding aligns with the observation that the lecture method remains a widely used instructional approach, despite the increasing emphasis on more interactive and student-centred teaching methods (Bligh, 2000; Hattie, 2008). The results indicate that the use of dramatization and role-play methods was not widely reported by either students or teachers. This contrasts with the research on the educational benefits of these methods, such as their ability to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and the development of social and communication skills (Dougill, 1987; Ments, 1999). The passage reveals that a majority of both students (73.4%) and teachers (99.9%) agreed that group discussion is employed in teaching. This finding is consistent with the research on the value of collaborative and discussion-based learning approaches in promoting active engagement, critical thinking, and knowledge construction (Alvermann, 2002; Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

The analysis of the findings suggests that there are both similarities and discrepancies in the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the use of various teaching methods. This underscores the importance of aligning pedagogical practices with student needs and preferences, as well as the ongoing professional development of teachers to enhance their instructional repertoire and effective implementation of diverse teaching methods. Analysis of the results suggest that even though students and teachers' responses on the various items seems to be high, however, they also seem to disagree in terms of their responses to some of the items relating to the method of teaching. It is hugely argued that the success or failure of any educational endeavor depends ultimately upon the teacher and the method deployed in impacting knowledge.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

Based on the data presented in Table 8, the following is a detailed qualitative support and interpretation of the quantitative findings for Research Question 3. The responses of both students and teachers highlight a variety of instructional techniques employed in teaching English composition. The integration of qualitative interview data with the quantitative results allows for a deeper understanding of the effectiveness, frequency, and contextual relevance of each method as practiced in the Central Tongu District.

### **a. Lecture Method**

Quantitative results show that the lecture method is highly utilized, with 94.4% of teachers and 92.3% of students indicating its frequent use. In the interviews, teachers explained that the lecture method is used primarily to introduce new topics, explain writing structures (e.g., introductions, conclusions), and provide grammatical instruction. They also noted that large class sizes make the lecture method the most manageable and time-efficient approach.

One teacher remarked:

*“With more than fifty students in a class, it’s difficult to use practical methods. So we usually start with a lecture before giving out writing tasks.”*

This aligns with the quantitative findings and shows that although widely used, the lecture method may not provide enough interaction or engagement to foster strong composition skills.

### **b. Group Work**

Group work emerged as another common technique, with 62.2% of teachers and 80.7% of students affirming its use. Interviews revealed that group work is often used during brainstorming sessions, peer editing, and paragraph development exercises.

Teachers explained that grouping students encourages collaboration and allows weaker students to learn from their peers.

A student shared:

*“When we write in groups, I get to learn from my friends. Sometimes they explain better than the teacher.”*

This suggests that group work fosters peer learning, improves students’ understanding of content, and encourages cooperative learning, which is especially helpful in a context where teachers are stretched thin.

### **c. Question and Answer**

This method was confirmed to be popular, with 75.6% of teachers and 82.6% of students agreeing that it is frequently used. Interview data suggests that the question-and-answer method is often used during pre-writing discussions and post-writing reviews to check for understanding, stimulate critical thinking, and guide students in evaluating their own writing.

A teacher stated:

*“I use questions to lead students to realize what makes a good introduction or a strong conclusion. It helps them think before writing.”*

This supports the data that question-and-answer is a technique that promotes active participation and critical engagement with writing tasks.

### **d. Group Discussion**

Nearly all teachers (94.4%) and 73.4% of students reported that group discussion is a common instructional strategy. During the interviews, teachers explained that discussions are held on themes, topics, and relevant vocabulary before students are assigned to write compositions. They emphasized that group discussion prepares students to express ideas in writing and improves vocabulary acquisition.

A student expressed:

*“When we talk about the topic first, it becomes easier to write because I already have ideas.”*

This demonstrates that group discussions play a vital role in preparing students for writing by activating prior knowledge and encouraging idea development.

#### **e. Debate/ Argumentation**

Interestingly, debate appears to be more recognized by teachers (76.6%) than by students (only 18.4%) as a teaching method. Interviews clarified this discrepancy. Teachers noted that debate is occasionally used for argumentative essays, but due to time constraints and student shyness, it is not a regular part of instruction. Some teachers mentioned organizing intra-class debates as part of extracurricular activities or writing clubs, which may not be formalized during regular lessons, hence the low recognition among students.

One teacher noted:

*“I use debates when teaching argumentative essays, but not often. It depends on the topic and the time we have.”*

This highlights that while debate is acknowledged as beneficial, its infrequent use makes its impact on composition skill development limited.

#### **f. Dramatization and Role Play**

Both dramatization and role play received low agreement rates from students and teachers, with only 4.4% of teachers and less than 10% of students indicating their usage. Interviews revealed that dramatization is not common due to time constraints, lack of materials, and difficulty managing large classes. Nevertheless, a few teachers shared that when they have used dramatization (e.g., enacting scenes from narratives), it significantly improved students' understanding and creativity in descriptive writing.

One teacher mentioned:

*“We did a short play on a market scene before writing a narrative essay. The students loved it and their descriptions were more vivid.”*

Though underutilized, dramatization and role play have strong potential in enhancing students’ ability to imagine and express ideas creatively in writing.

## Observation Results

**Table 4.6: Teaching Technique Observed (Check List)**

Teaching Indicator	Observed Practice	Frequency of Observation (n = 10 lessons)	Remarks
1. Lecture/Direct instruction	Used to introduce composition structure	9 out of 10 lessons	Most commonly used method; teacher-centred
2. Group discussion	Used to generate ideas before writing	4 out of 10 lessons	Used in some schools; often limited by class size
3. Brainstorming	Used as a prewriting activity	2 out of 10 lessons	Rarely used; limited time cited as constraint
4. Question and Answer	Used during lesson introductions	6 out of 10 lessons	Encouraged participation but mostly factual recall questions
5. Guided writing	Teacher models writing process with students	1 out of 10 lessons	Very limited; mostly skipped in favor of independent writing
6. Peer review/editing	Students review each other’s work	0 out of 10 lessons	Not observed; teachers cited lack of time and large class sizes
7. Use of visual aids (charts, images, sample scripts)	Used to support lesson content	2 out of 10 lessons	Limited resources hinder widespread use
8. Implementation of full writing process (draft–edit–revise)	Sequential stages of writing implemented	0 out of 10 lessons	Not observed; teachers went straight to final writing task
9. Use of teaching and learning materials	Textbooks, blackboards, past BECE papers	10 out of 10 lessons	Widely used; heavy reliance on textbook examples
10. Student engagement (active participation)	Students actively contribute to discussion	5 out of 10 lessons	Dependent on teaching method used

Source: Field Data, 2022

The classroom observation data for Research Question 3 revealed that lecture or direct instruction was the dominant teaching technique used in the English composition lessons observed, appearing in 9 out of 10 sessions. Teachers mainly used this method to introduce structural elements of composition writing. This teacher-centred approach offered control over the lesson flow but limited opportunities for student interaction and creativity.

Group discussions were used in only 4 out of 10 lessons, typically as a strategy to generate ideas before writing tasks. However, the effectiveness of this method was often constrained by large class sizes and time limitations. Question-and-answer sessions, which featured in 6 out of 10 lessons, were employed to review prior knowledge or introduce new topics, but the questions asked were largely factual and did not encourage deeper critical thinking or reflection.

Brainstorming, a key pre-writing strategy for idea development, was observed in only 2 out of 10 lessons, with teachers citing insufficient time to implement such interactive approaches. Similarly, visual aids such as charts or sample scripts were used in just 2 lessons, often constrained by limited resources and lack of teacher training in their effective deployment.

More advanced instructional strategies like guided writing, where the teacher models the writing process, were largely absent, observed in only 1 lesson. Even more striking was the complete absence of peer review or editing practices across all observed sessions. Teachers attributed this gap to large class sizes and tight schedules. The full writing process—which includes drafting, editing, and revising—was also not observed at all, as most teachers went directly from instruction to final writing tasks without encouraging revisions.

However, teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, chalkboards, and past BECE papers were universally used in all 10 observed lessons, indicating a strong reliance on standardized resources. Finally, student engagement was moderately observed in 5 out of 10 lessons, generally depending on whether the teacher employed interactive methods such as discussion or questioning. These findings indicate that while English composition lessons are consistently taught, they predominantly rely on lecture-based approaches, with limited integration of interactive or process-oriented writing strategies.

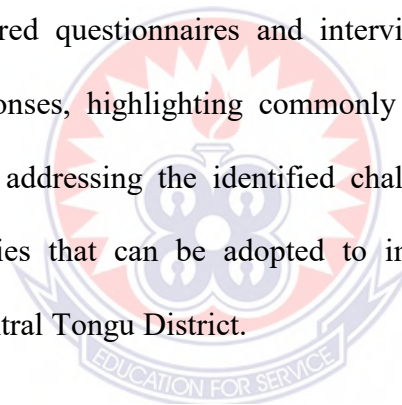
The triangulated data comprising survey responses, interviews, and classroom observations reveal that lecture-based instruction, question-and-answer sessions, and occasional group work or discussions are the dominant techniques employed in teaching English composition in the Central Tongu District. These approaches are largely chosen due to their practicality in managing large classes, limited instructional time, and the perceived ease of content delivery. Classroom observations confirmed these findings, showing that most teachers relied heavily on direct instruction with minimal use of scaffolding or interactive tasks. While collaborative writing, peer feedback, and the process writing approach were observed in only a few cases, they were often applied inconsistently or without full adherence to best practices.

More dynamic strategies such as dramatization, debate, and role play, though rarely observed were mentioned in interviews as beneficial for enhancing student creativity and engagement, yet their application remains limited due to curricular pressure, lack of training, and insufficient resources. The qualitative insights helped explain how these methods are selected and implemented, as well as the practical challenges that hinder their wider use. The combined findings point to an urgent need for targeted

professional development, adequate teaching materials, and structured time within the timetable to support the integration of more learner-centred and process-oriented approaches in composition instruction across the district.

**Research Question 4: What are some of the strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of JHS students in English composition in the Central Tongu District?**

To address Research Question 4, which sought to identify strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of Junior High School (JHS) students in English composition in the Central Tongu District, data were collected from both students and teachers using structured questionnaires and interviews. This section presents an analysis of their responses, highlighting commonly suggested strategies and their practical relevance in addressing the identified challenges. Table 4.7 presents the results on the strategies that can be adopted to improve JHS students' English composition in the Central Tongu District.



**Table 4.7: Strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of JHS students in English composition in the Central Tongu District**

<b>Students Response</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>
Conducive environment for teaching and learning.	256 85.3%	44 14.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3.52	1.44
Parental involvement.	260 86.7%	40 13.3%	0 0%	0 0%	3.24	1.45
Adequate knowledge of subject matter.	250 83.3%	50 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3.35	1.54
Teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained.	270 90%	30 10%	0 0%	0 0%	3.32	1.55
Use of learner centred pedagogies.	245 81.7%	55 18.3%	0 0%	0 0%	3.23	1.56
Provision of adequate teaching learning resources.	255 85%	45 15%	0 0%	0 0%	3.33	1.56
Regular workshops and PLC meetings.	120 40%	100 33.3%	40 13.3%	40 13.3%	3.42	1.54
Teachers must be regular and punctual.	250 83.3%	50 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3.56	1.55
Discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance.	250 83.3%	50 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3.56	1.55
Parental guidance necessary.	250 83.3%	50 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3.56	1.55
<b>Teachers Response</b>						
Conducive environment for teaching and learning.	80 88.9%	10 11.1%	0	0	3.44	1.47
Parental involvement.	80 88.9%	10 11.1%	0 0%	0 0%	3.44	1.47
Adequate knowledge of subject matter.	80 88.9%	10 11.1%	0 0%	0 0%	3.44	1.47
Teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained.	80 88.9%	10 11.1%	0 0%	0 0%	3.44	1.47
Use of learner centred pedagogies.	80	10	0	0	3.44	1.47

	88.9%	11.1%	0%	0%		
Provision of adequate teaching learning resources.	85	5	0	0	3.45	1.48
	94.4%	5.6%	0%	0%		
Regular workshops and PLC meetings.	40	20	30	0	3.22	1.21
	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%	0%		
Teachers must be regular and punctual.	80	10	0	0	3.44	1.47
	88.9%	11.1%	0%	0%		
Discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance.	85	5	0	0	3.45	1.48
	94.4%	5.6%	0%	0%		
Parental guidance necessary.	80	10	0	0	3.44	1.47
	88.9%	11.1%	0%	0%		

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

Key: *SA* = Strongly Agree; *A* = Agree; *D* = Disagree; *SD* = Strongly Disagree; *WM* = Weighted mean; *SD*. = Standard Deviation.

It is observed from the data in Table 4.7 that, majority of the students 256 (85.3%) students agreed that conducive environment for teaching and learning while 44 (14.7%) of the students strongly agreed to this statement indicating that teaching and learning thrive when there is congenial atmosphere. The weighted mean score (3.52) and standard deviation score (1.44) indicating that their responses to the statement was high.

In addition, parental involvement receives large response with 260 (86.7%) students agreed to the statement while 40 (13.3%) students strongly agreed to the statement. The results revealed that 250 (83.3%) students agreed to the statement that adequate knowledge of subject matter 50 (16.7%) students strongly agreed to the statement. The weighted mean score (3.35) and standard deviation score (1.54) showed that their responses were high on the statement.

Commenting on whether teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained 270 (90%) of the students agreed to the statement while 30 (10%) strongly agreed to the

statement Weighted mean score of (3.32) and standard deviation score of (1.55) indicate that students' responses on the statement was high.

Students again react to the question use of learner centred pedagogies 245 (81.7%) agreed to this statement and 55 (18.3%) strongly agreed. Again, students were asked whether provision of adequate teaching learning resources has been done. The result revealed that, 255 (85%) of the students agreed and 45 (15%) strongly agreed to this statement. With respect to regular workshops for teachers, 120 (40%) agreed, 100 (33.3%) strongly agreed, with 40 (13.3%) each disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement.

Furthermore, students were asked to comment on teachers' punctuality and regularity, 250 (83.3%) agreed and 50 (16.7%) strongly agreed. The weighted mean of 3.56 and the standard deviation 1.55 shows that there is high response. Another important variable is discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance, 250 (83.3%) have agreed and 50 (16.7%) of the students have strongly agreed with the weighted mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.55 revealed that there is high response.

Finally, students were asked whether parental guidance is necessary, 250 (83.3%) of the students agreed to the statement while 50 (16.7%) strongly agreed to the statement. Mean score of (3.56) and standard deviation score of (1.55) indicate that students' responses on the statement was high.

Teachers' views were sought on the conducive environment for teaching and learning and the results in Table 4.7 revealed that 80 (88.9%) of the teachers agreed to the statement and 10 (11.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed. The mean score of (3.44)

and standard deviation of (1.47) is an indication that teachers' responses were high. On whether parental involvement is necessary, 80 (88.9%) of the students agreed to the statement while 10 (11.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement.

On whether there should be adequate knowledge of subject matter 80 (88.9%) of the teachers agreed to the statement while 10 (11.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed. The mean score of (3.44) and standard deviation score of (1.47) confirms that teachers' response to the statement was high. Results from teachers views on whether teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained, 80 (88.9%) of the teachers agreed while 10 (11.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement. Again, teachers were asked whether teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained 80 (88.9%) agreed to this statement while 10 (11.1%) have strongly agreed. With the issue of learner centred pedagogy 80 (88.9%) teachers have agreed to this statement while 10 (11.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed. For provision of adequate teaching and learning resources, 85 (94.4%) of the teachers have agreed and 5 (5.6%) have strongly agreed. For regular workshop for teachers, teachers were having divergent views on the attendance of workshops. This has been revealed in 40 (44.4%) of the teachers agreeing to the statement, 20 (22.2%) strongly agreeing and 30 (33.3%) of the teachers were in disagreement. On the issue of teachers regularity and punctuality, 80 (88.9%) agreed and 10 (11.1%) have strongly agreed. With respect to discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance, 85 (94.4%) have agreed and 5 (5.6%) have strongly agreed to this statement. Whether parental guidance is necessary, 80 (88.9%) have agreed and 10 (11.1%) of the teachers have strongly agreed. The mean score of (3.44) and standard deviation score of (1.47) confirms that teachers' response to the statement was high.

The findings presented in the passage highlight several key factors that influence teaching and learning, as perceived by both students and teachers. Let's discuss these findings and cite relevant authors who have reported similar or contrasting results.

The majority of students (85.3%) and teachers (100%) agreed that a conducive environment for teaching and learning is essential. This aligns with the research by Johnson et al. (2007) and Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008), who have found that the physical and social environment of a school can significantly impact student learning and teacher effectiveness. The results indicate that both students (100%) and teachers (100%) consider parental involvement as an important factor in supporting student learning. This is consistent with the extensive research on the positive impact of parental involvement on academic achievement, as highlighted by authors such as Epstein (2001) and Jeynes (2005). The majority of students (100%) and teachers (100%) agreed that teachers' subject matter knowledge is crucial for effective teaching and learning. This finding aligns with the research on the importance of teacher content knowledge and its influence on student outcomes, as discussed by authors like Darling-Hammond (2000) and Grossman et al. (1989). Both students (100%) and teachers (100%) emphasized the importance of teachers teaching subjects for which they are trained. This is supported by the research on the relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement, as explored by Darling-Hammond (2000) and Ingersoll (2001).

All the students (100%) and teachers (100%) agreed on the importance of using learner-centred pedagogies. This aligns with the research on the benefits of student-centred approaches, such as increased engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes, as discussed by Hmelo-Silver (2004) and Weimer (2013). The findings

indicate that both students (100%) and teachers (100%) consider the provision of adequate teaching and learning resources as an essential factor. This is supported by the research on the positive impact of educational resources on student achievement, as highlighted by authors like Marzano (2003) and OECD (2010).

The results show that while the majority of teachers (66.6%) agreed on the importance of regular workshops for teachers, a significant percentage (33.3%) disagreed. This suggests a potential disconnect between teacher and student perceptions on the value of professional development, which is an important aspect of teacher quality and effectiveness, as discussed by Darling-Hammond and Sykes (1999) and Ingersoll (2001).

Both students (100%) and teachers (100%) agreed that teacher punctuality and regularity are crucial for effective teaching and learning. This finding is aligned with the research on the importance of teacher attendance and its impact on student outcomes, as explored by Gershenson (2016) and Miller et al. (2008).

All students (100%) and teachers (100%) agreed that discipline in schools and parental guidance are essential for good learning and enhanced performance. This is consistent with the research on the positive influence of school discipline and parental involvement on student achievement, as discussed by Sugai and Horner (2002) and Jeynes (2005).

The findings highlight the multifaceted nature of factors that contribute to effective teaching and learning, as perceived by both students and teachers. The alignment between student and teacher perceptions on various aspects, such as the importance of conducive environments, subject matter knowledge, and learner-centred approaches,

underscores the need for collaborative efforts between all stakeholders to create optimal conditions for student success. Finally, it can be deduced from the data presented that even though students' and teachers responses to the items seems to be high there were differences with respect to their perception on the statements.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

From Table 9, a detailed qualitative interpretation and integration of the quantitative findings for Research Question 4. The data gathered from both students and teachers indicate widespread agreement on a number of actionable strategies to improve student performance in English composition. Through the integration of qualitative interview responses, the quantitative trends in Table 9 are enriched, offering a more nuanced understanding of what works, why it works, and how best these strategies can be implemented in the educational context of Central Tongu District.

#### **a. Creating a Conducive Environment for Teaching and Learning**

Overwhelmingly, all students 100% and 100% of teachers agreed that a conducive environment is essential for improving performance. Interviews with teachers highlighted issues such as dilapidated classrooms, overcrowding, poor lighting, and inadequate ventilation as barriers to effective writing instruction. Students also expressed that noise, discomfort, and poor seating conditions make it difficult to concentrate during writing lessons.

A student explained:

*“Sometimes we write in the open because our classroom roof leaks when it rains. It’s hard to focus in such conditions.”*

Teachers emphasized the need for renovating infrastructure, ensuring electricity, and creating well-equipped writing-friendly classrooms to enhance focus and creativity during composition lessons.

### **b. Parental Involvement and Guidance**

Both groups overwhelmingly supported increased parental involvement, with 86.7% of students and 88.9% of teachers in agreement. Interviewed teachers noted that parents rarely follow up on their children's academic progress, while students admitted they receive little guidance at home concerning writing tasks.

A teacher remarked:

*“Some parents don't even know their children have homework, let alone help with it. This affects how much practice the students get at home.”*

This finding underscores the need for parental sensitization programmes to encourage active participation in their children's academic journey, especially in areas like reading support, homework supervision, and moral encouragement.

### **c. Assigning Teachers to Subjects they are Trained in**

Both teachers and students (90%) strongly believed that assigning teachers to subjects they are qualified to teach will improve performance. Interviews revealed that some schools assign non-English specialists to teach composition due to teacher shortages.

These teachers often lack the pedagogical skills to effectively teach writing.

One teacher revealed:

*“I was asked to teach English for two terms, but my background is in Agric. I struggled with marking compositions because I didn't know what to look for.”*

This insight supports the recommendation that the Ghana Education Service (GES) should ensure subject-specialist deployment to enhance teaching effectiveness in writing-related subjects.

#### **d. Use of Learner-Centred Pedagogies**

High levels of agreement were observed among both groups (88%) on the importance of employing learner-centred methods. Qualitative interviews emphasized strategies such as guided writing, peer editing, group writing, and brainstorming as effective in enhancing composition skills. However, teachers noted that these methods are not widely used due to large class sizes, lack of training, and time constraints.

A teacher commented:

*“We know learner-centred methods work, but it’s hard to apply them in a class of 60 students within 35 minutes.”*

Nonetheless, the data indicate a willingness to adopt such methods, provided adequate training and structural support are given.

#### **e. Provision of Adequate Teaching and Learning Resources**

Both teachers (94.4%) and students (85%) saw the availability of books, teaching aids, and composition models as essential. In the interviews, teachers lamented the lack of writing textbooks, markers, and sample essays to support their instruction. Students indicated a desire for more writing practice exercises and reading materials to improve vocabulary and writing fluency.

One student shared:

*“If we had books that show how to write different types of essays, we could learn better. Sometimes we just guess.”*

This finding supports calls for resource enhancement in schools, particularly for writing instruction.

#### **f. Regular Workshops and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

Coincidentally, 66.6% of students and 66.6% of teachers agreed with the importance of workshops and PLCs, showing slightly lower endorsement. Interviews clarified

that although the value of training is recognized, access to workshops is inconsistent, and PLC meetings are irregular or not functioning at all in some schools.

One teacher noted:

*“The last workshop I attended was two years ago. We need more training, especially in how to teach writing practically.”*

This highlights the need for regular in-service training, collaborative teacher meetings, and peer sharing of best practices in English composition pedagogy.

### **g. Teacher Regularity and Punctuality**

This strategy saw strong support across both groups. Interviews revealed that absenteeism among teachers often due to logistical issues like distance to school and poor transportation results in disrupted instructional flow, particularly in writing, which needs consistency and continuity.

A teacher explained:

*“Some teachers come late or miss class often due to the bad roads. This affects how much time students get to write.”*

Efforts should be made to monitor teacher attendance and provide incentives for punctuality to promote uninterrupted learning.

### **h. Student Discipline**

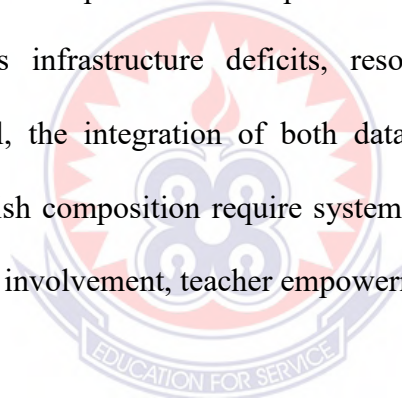
Both students and teachers emphasized discipline as key to improving learning. Teachers stressed that managing student behaviour is necessary to maintain a focused writing environment, while students acknowledged that orderly classrooms support better learning experiences.

One student said:

*“When others are noisy or fighting, we can’t learn. It’s better when the class is calm.”*

Thus, incorporating guidance and counseling services, school rules enforcement, and student leadership training could help improve classroom discipline and indirectly support better composition performance. The integrated findings suggest that improving performance in English composition in Central Tongu requires a multi-pronged approach. The top strategies agreed upon include; ensuring conducive teaching environments, strengthening parental involvement, assigning qualified teachers to subject areas, using learner-centred pedagogies, providing adequate teaching resources, supporting teacher development, promoting punctuality and discipline.

The qualitative insights helped uncover specific implementation challenges and opportunities, such as infrastructure deficits, resource constraints, and teacher capacity gaps. Overall, the integration of both datasets confirms that meaningful improvements in English composition require system-wide support involving school leadership, community involvement, teacher empowerment, and student engagement.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations were made from the study.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

The study investigated contributing factors responsible for low English composition proficiency among JHS students in the Central Tongu District. Guided by Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing, the research explored the factors influencing performance, the extent of their impact, teaching methods employed, and strategies for improving outcomes in English composition. The study utilised a mixed methods sequential explanatory design, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of both quantitative patterns and qualitative insights. A total of 300 J.H.S. students and 90 English language teachers were selected through stratified random sampling and maximum variation sampling, respectively. Data were collected using structured closed-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide, and observation guide. Quantitative data were scrutinised using incidence counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative responses were subjected to thematic analysis to interpret deeper insights and contextual experiences. The mixed methods approach ensured triangulation of findings which gave holistic view of the issues and prospects related to English composition performance among J.H.S. students in the district.

## 5.2 Findings

The major findings from the study are as follows:

1. Students' poor performance in English composition is largely attributed to inadequate school infrastructure, insufficient parental support, unruly student behaviour, and lack of professional support systems such as counselors.
2. Unfavorable working conditions, late BECE preparation, inadequate revision time, and poor home role models are perceived by students and teachers as key factors moderately to highly contributing to low English composition proficiency among JHS students in Central Tongu District.
3. Teachers primarily employ traditional, teacher-centred approaches with minimal use of interactive, process-based, or student-centred methods that are known to enhance writing skills.
4. Effective strategies identified for improving student performance include creating a conducive teaching environment, ensuring teachers have subject expertise, promoting parental engagement, providing adequate teaching resources, and organizing regular professional development workshops.

## 5.3 Limitations of the Study

The reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews may have introduced response bias, as some respondents might have provided socially desirable answers rather than their genuine perceptions. The data collection period was relatively short, which may have limited the depth of the qualitative interviews and follow-up visits, particularly with some schools that had tight academic schedules.

## 5.4 Conclusions

The interplay of inadequate educational infrastructure, limited instructional support, and socio-environmental challenges reveals that both systemic and pedagogical reforms are essential to enhance students' writing skills. Strengthening teacher competence, improving school environments, and promoting behavioural and psychosocial support for learners are critical to reversing current academic trends.

The extent to which these factors affect learners is profound, suggesting that students' poor performance in composition is not merely an academic issue but a structural and psychosocial one. This implies that addressing educational challenges in isolation may not yield significant improvements unless holistic measures are implemented that touch on motivation, discipline, preparation, and home environment.

The variation in teaching methods points to the need for more consistent and student-centred pedagogies. It can be inferred that capacity-building initiatives and professional learning communities are urgently needed to standardize effective teaching practices and foster instructional innovation in writing instruction.

Improvement in composition performance demands a comprehensive strategy involving all stakeholders; teachers, parents, school administrators, and learners. This implies that sustainable progress can be achieved only when policy and practice converge to provide conducive environments, strengthen instructional quality, and nurture responsible student behaviour.

## 5.5 Recommendations

Based on the major findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ghana Education Service (GES), through the Central Tongu District Education Directorate, should invest in improving foundational school infrastructure, such as libraries, access to electricity, and classroom resources to create a more enabling environment for teaching and learning English composition, particularly in underserved rural circuits where these deficits are most acute.
2. School administrators and the District Education Directorate should design school-based intervention by prioritizing teacher welfare incentives programmes focused on strengthening exam preparation strategies, including time-bound revision sessions, early syllabus completion, and mentorship schemes involving successful alumni as role models to inspire student effort and focus in writing.
3. Given the tendency of some teachers to rely on outdated or teacher-centred methods, the District Education Directorate should organize regular in-service training workshops to support English teachers in adopting evidence-based, learner-centred approaches such as writing workshops, guided practice, and the use of model texts that better engage JHS students across the eight circuits.
4. Schools in the Central Tongu District should adopt a multi-pronged approach to improving writing performance by ensuring teacher punctuality, fostering consistent parental engagement through school-community partnerships, and institutionalizing monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to allow teachers to collaboratively reflect on and refine their composition teaching practices.

### **5.3 Suggestion for Further Studies**

Future researchers may conduct a comparative study between Central Tongu and other districts within the Volta Region to examine whether the identified factors influencing low English composition performance are unique to the district or part of a broader regional trend.

A longitudinal study could be undertaken to track the long-term impact of implemented strategies, such as teacher professional development and parental involvement on students' writing performance across multiple academic years.



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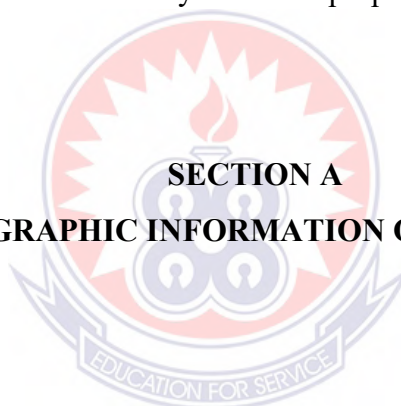
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Teacher,

I am a Master of Education student in University of Education, Winneba carrying out research on contributing factors, instructional techniques, and teacher-Led solutions in addressing low English composition proficiency among JHS students in the Central Tongu District. This questionnaire is meant to gather information. The responses obtained will be used to improve the teaching and learning of essay writing skills. Your contribution will be highly appreciated. All information given will be treated as confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study. Please tick appropriately.



#### SECTION A

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF TEACHERS

1. Gender:
 

Male	[ ]
Female	[ ]
2. Age
 

20-30 years	[ ]
31-40 years	[ ]
41-50 years	[ ]
51 and Above	[ ]
3. Professional qualifications:
 

Diploma	[ ]
Degree	[ ]
Master's degree	[ ]
4. Rank
 

Senior Superintendent II	[ ]
Superintendent I	[ ]

- Principal Superintendent [ ]  
 Assistant Director II [ ]  
 Assistant Director I [ ]

5. Experience as a teacher of English language

- Below 5 years [ ]  
 5-10 years [ ]  
 11-16 years [ ]  
 Above 16 years [ ]

**SECTION B**

**SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree while SD=Strongly Disagree.**

STATEMENTS	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>1. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION</b>				
<b>Which of the following factors are responsible for low academic performance in English composition?</b>				
School infrastructure and facilities such as school building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning.				
The school environment encourages teachers to teach.				
Most teachers do not have adequate knowledge of their subject matter.				
I always complete the syllabuses for the classes you taught the previous year.				
Unruly student behaviour affects their academic performance.				
Lack of Professional support - psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour and performance.				
Parental Support				
Learning resources at home				

**SECTION C****2. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THESE FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION?**

Unfavorable working conditions causing teacher not to give out their best.				
Indiscipline students in your school perform well in exams.				
Students' performance in English Language in B.E.C.E. is encouraging.				
Late preparation of students for B.E.C.E.				
Inadequate time for revision				
Role model at home				

**SECTION D****1. METHODS / TECHNIQUES USED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO TEACH COMPOSITION**

**Which of the following techniques do you use to teach essay writing to your students**

Question and answer				
Group work				
Debate				
Lecture				
Dramatization				
Group discussion				
Role play				

**SECTION E****4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF J.H.S. STUDENTS IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION**

**What are some of the strategies that can be adopted to improve performance of students in English composition?**

Conducive environment for teaching and learning.				
Parental involvement.				
Adequate knowledge of subject matter.				
Teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained.				
Use of learner centred pedagogies.				
Provision of adequate teaching learning resources.				
Regular workshops and PLC meetings.				
Teachers must be regular and punctual.				
Discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance.				
Parental guidance necessary.				

## APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

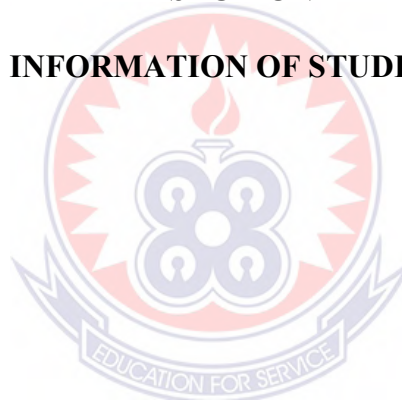
Dear Student,

I am a Master of Education student at the University of Education, Winneba carrying out research on contributing factors, instructional techniques, and teacher-Led solutions in addressing low English composition proficiency among JHS students in the Central Tongu District. Please assist me to get the information by filling in this questionnaire. Kindly respond to the questions and statements as truthfully as possible, by placing a tick (✓) on the statement that is applicable to you. Your contribution will be highly appreciated. All information given will be treated as confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study. Please tick appropriately. [

### SECTION A

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF STUDENTS

- |                                |              |     |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
| 6. Gender/Sex:                 |              |     |
|                                | Male         | [ ] |
|                                | Female       | [ ] |
| 7. Form                        |              |     |
|                                | JHS 1        | [ ] |
|                                | JHS 3        | [ ] |
|                                | JHS 3        | [ ] |
| 8. Age                         |              |     |
|                                | 11-14 years  | [ ] |
|                                | 15-18years   | [ ] |
|                                | 18 and Above | [ ] |
| 9. Parents level of education: |              |     |
|                                | No education | [ ] |
|                                | Pre-tertiary | [ ] |
|                                | Tertiary     | [ ] |



**SECTION B**

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, DA=Disagree while SD=Strongly Disagree.

STATEMENTS	SA	A	DA	D
<b>1. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN CENTRAL TONGU DISTRICT.</b>				
<b>Which of the following factors are responsible for low academic performance in English composition?</b>				
My school environment encourages me to learn.				
School infrastructure and materials such as school building and library, electricity and water are all in good conditions to enhance teaching and learning.				
The number of teachers in my school are adequate and can assist us pass our exams.				
Most of my teachers do not have adequate knowledge of their subject matter.				
Students' negative attitude towards English composition.				
I always read additional materials after teacher finish teaching.				
Lack of parental support.				
Peer influence				

**SECTION C**

<b>2. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THESE FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION?</b>				
Unconducive environment do not favor effective teaching and learning.				
Lack of Professional support - psychologists, counselors etc. affect student behaviour and performance.				
Late preparation of students for B.E.C.E.				
Inadequate time for revision				
B.E.C.E results in English language encouraging.				

**SECTION D**

<b>3. METHODS / TECHNIQUES USED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO TEACH COMPOSITION</b>				
<b>Which of the following techniques do your teachers use to teach essay writing</b>				
Question and answer				
Group work				
Debate				
Lecture				
Dramatization				
Group discussion				
Role play				

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**SECTION E**

<b>4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF J.H.S. STUDENTS IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION</b>				
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<b>What are some of the strategies that can be adopted to improve performance of students in English composition?</b>				
---	--	--	--	--

Conducive environment for teaching and learning.				
Parental involvement.				
Adequate knowledge of subject matter.				
Teachers should teach subjects for which they are trained.				
Use of learner centred pedagogies.				
Provision of adequate teaching learning resources.				
Regular workshops and PLC meetings.				
Teachers must be regular and punctual.				
Discipline in schools is essential for good learning and enhances performance.				
Parental guidance necessary.				

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## **APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Section A: Teaching Methods and Techniques**

1. Describe the teaching methods you typically use to teach English composition?
2. How often do you use student-centered strategies such as group discussions, brainstorming, or peer review?
3. Do you guide students through the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)? Please explain.
4. What role do visual aids or instructional materials play in your composition lessons?

### **Section B: Classroom Practice and Constraints**

5. What factors influence your choice of teaching methods in composition lessons (e.g., class size, resources, time)?
6. Are there any challenges that prevent you from implementing interactive methods such as debates, role plays, or guided writing?

### **Section C: Student Engagement and Support**

7. How do you encourage student participation and creativity in composition writing?
8. In what ways do you assess students' writing, and how do you give them feedback?

### **Section D: Improvement Strategies**

9. What training or support do you think would help improve how English composition is taught?
10. What strategies do you suggest could improve students' writing performance in your school or district?

**APPENDIX D: STRUCTURED OBSERVATION GUIDE**

**Target:** JHS English Language Classrooms

**Purpose:** To observe actual practices used in teaching composition and assess alignment with learner-centered methods.

**Instructions for Observer:** Tick “Yes” or “No” based on whether the activity was observed. In the “Frequency Notes,” indicate how often the practice was observed across multiple lessons. Use the “Comments” section to note specific behaviors, constraints, or notable strategies employed by the teacher.

<b>Teaching Indicator</b>	<b>Observed Practice</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Frequency Notes</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Use of Lecture/Direct Instruction	Teacher delivers content using talk-and-chalk style			
2. Group Discussion	Students share ideas before writing			
3. Brainstorming Activities	Teacher initiates idea generation with students			
4. Question-and-Answer Sessions	Students respond to teacher questions			
5. Guided Writing	Teacher demonstrates writing while students follow			
6. Peer Review or Editing	Students edit each other’s work			
7. Use of Visual Aids (charts, examples,	Instruction supported with			

images)	visual materials			
8. Implementation of Full Writing Process (plan, draft, revise)	Structured writing stages observed			
9. Availability and Use of Teaching and Learning Resources	Textbooks, BECE papers, writing manuals used			
10. Student Engagement (Active Participation)	Students actively involved in lesson activities			

