

**The Structure of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)  
Peace-Keeping Agreements**

Vivien BELLO-OSAGIE

Department of English Language  
School of General Studies  
Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola  
moriatvbello@gmail.com

**Abstract**

This paper investigates the intersections of language, graphological structure and peacekeeping agreements. It analyses the language use in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping agreement texts (EPKA) and thereby enriches the theoretical and analytical body of knowledge on the discourse of peace negotiation in contemporary English. It is hoped that the findings of this research sheds light on how the discourse features of the language of peacekeeping documents are organized to which will provide materials for ESP materials production and curricula design. Furthermore, this article contributes to existent scholarship on structural constructions of peace negotiation and on the dynamics of contemporary ECOWAS peacekeeping agreement discourse.

**Keywords:** ECOWAS, graphological features, peacekeeping agreement, punctuations

## 1. Introduction

Every day, language is structured to create and shape the world through social interaction. According to Yeibo and Akerele (2014), there is a symbiotic relationship between language structure and language function, which is particularly exploited by many writers to relate language forms deployed in texts to their intended messages. They insist that this is possible because of the inherent elasticity or malleability of language as a communicative tool which can be shaped or conditioned by social or discourse situations. In understanding the textual structure of certain texts, it may be necessary to describe the physical structure in order to give an insight into the structural complexity of the data.

The structure of a text is understood in this article to mean the format of a text, the organizational plan, the arrangement of and relationship between different parts and elements of the text. This is related to what Varo and Hughes (2002:103) refer to as the dominant outline or organizational macrostructure. This paper examines the macrostructure of the ECOWAS Peacekeeping Agreement (henceforth referred to as EPKA) discourse by paying attention to the layout and the graphological features of the texts as a means of revealing the underlying meaning reflected in discourse of this kind.

## 2. Graphology and Graphological Analysis

Etymologically, the term has Greek roots-‘grapho’ meaning writing and ‘logos’ meaning word and, in its more known sense, it focuses on or deals primarily with handwriting. The term has, however, become very crucial and strategic in linguistic circles, particularly in descriptive stylistics and its use has extended to the study of all subtly meaningful symbols and signs, including pictorial devices, which help authors and writers to communicate messages.

Writers deploy various ways to encode and disseminate their message, and these become the stylistic features that distinguish one writer from another. According to Adegaju (2008:160), graphology concerns such matters as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, a text’s layout, lists, font choices, underlining, italicization, paragraphing, colour, etc which can all create different kinds of impact, some of which will cause the reader to react differently. In the same light, Ngara (1982:17) opines that graphology covers such areas as the layout of the text, colour, shape of the printed marks, punctuation, paragraphing and spacing, etc. Short (1996:54-57) adds that splitting of a word to separate letters, writing all words together without orthographical spaces, etc, are also graphological patterns or symbols.

Graphology is a level of linguistic analysis which focuses on the layout of texts, the size or shape of words and any other feature that is graphical or orthographical. It is a fundamental and crucial way of paying close attention to the visual images and diagrams in a text which help to encode, extend or modify its signification. In other words, it is an approach to the explication of textual meaning, since it focuses essentially on non-verbal aspects of texts, such as form and visual appearance which carry pragmatic force that yields meaning within a

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particular social framework. Stressing the importance of graphological features of texts, Adegoju (2008:160) posits that the meaning generated at the graphological level in some cases could be more significant than that generated by verbal signifiers. To lend credence to his view, he refers to Hodge and Kress's position as cited by Locke (2004:23) that "... in contemporary society, meaning resides strongly and pervasively in systems other than the verbal, especially the visual." A point which this paper seeks to demonstrate is that graphological elements are key in critical textual analysis, as they are the first qualities of a written and printed text that we notice and "carry certain pragmatic force that is central to the interpretation of discourse" (Campsall, 2008).

According to Alo (1998:5), the descriptive study of style rests on the analysis of language resources which can be found at the various levels of language description including the following:

- Phonology (sounds/sound effects)
- Lexis (word usage and diction)
- Grammar (word and sentence structure)
- Semantics (units of meaning)
- Graphology (orthography or writing system)
- Pragmatics (language for action or getting things done).

Graphology is, thus, a level of linguistic analysis which focuses on the layout of texts, the size or shape of words and any other feature that is graphical or orthographical. It is a fundamental and crucial way of paying close attention to the visual images and diagrams in a text which help to encode, extend or modify its signification. In other words, it is a paralinguistic approach to the explication of textual meaning, since it focuses essentially on non-verbal aspects of texts, such as form and visual appearance which carry pragmatic force, that is, which yield their meaning by distinctive situational use within a particular social framework.

### 3. ECOWAS and Its Peacekeeping Mission

On May 28, 1975, heads of state and government of fifteen West African countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo - convened in Lagos to sign the treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (ECOWAS Revised Treaty). Cape Verde joined the body two years later in 1977, bringing ECOWAS membership to its current composition of sixteen nations (Washington, 1998). ECOWAS, as the African leaders envisioned it, would foster the development of an economic union in the sub-region to "raise the living standards of its peoples, and to (sic) maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent" (ECOWAS Treaty).

At the time of the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975, its main objective was the economic integration of its Member States: the harmonization of national police, increased integration,

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common environmental protection policies, and the creation of joint enterprises, the formation of a common market, adoption of uniform trade policies, and the standardization of legal practices (ECOWAS Treaty). ECOWAS has been moderately successful. It constructed highways, promoted anti-drug policies, and created a regional travellers' check, but its original goals remain elusive (Brown, 1999). Boundary disputes, periods of civil unrest in many of the countries, and enduring tensions between the French-speaking and English-speaking states impeded the formation of a real community (Brown, 1999). These led to the need to gradually attach greater importance to peace, defence and security issues (Brown, 1999).

Despite its economic shortcomings, the decade of the 1990s has been particularly decisive for ECOWAS' evolution into an organization capable of intervening diplomatically and militarily in cases of serious threats to the security of a Member State and within the community space in general. ECOWAS consequently played a key role in the arduous resolution of protracted and devastating civil wars in Liberia (1990-97 and 2003- 2007) and Sierra Leone (1991-2002) which sometimes spilled over into Guinea and threatened to cause unrest in the entire West African region (Yabi, 2010). Thus, it can be said that ECOWAS had one notable success: the success of its military arm, the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG).

ECOMOG restored peace and stability to Liberia. Liberia endured a violent, seven-year civil war as a result of a 1989 attempt by rebels to overthrow the government. Over the objections of some member states, ECOWAS created and deployed a military force to Liberia. There is a wide array of information available on the performance of the ECOWAS and its military arm, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Observer Group (ECOMOG), in restoring peace to Liberia. Buoyed by its success in Liberia, ECOWAS sent peacekeeping forces to other countries in turmoil. It further proposed the formation of a stand-by crisis response force and the creation of a permanent mechanism for conflict resolution (Uesugi, 2004). A cursory look at the experience suggests that West Africans were united in seeking to end the carnage. Stability and the humanitarian situation were concerns.

From the foregoing, it is clear that ECOWAS has, over the years, proven its capacity to undertake successful conflict prevention, peacemaking and conflict resolution under the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of 10th December 1999 (hereafter referred to as the Mechanism). The Institution has achieved remarkable success in fulfilling its mandate by containing violent conflicts in the region and carrying out conflict prevention interventions through preventive diplomacy initiatives - fact-finding missions, quiet diplomacy, diplomatic pressure and mediation (Yabi, 2010). The institution has also established several promising conflict prevention organs to underpin its mandate, including the Early Warning System, the Mediation and Security Council, Offices of the Special Representative, the Council of the Wise and Special Mediators. ECOWAS Member States bear primary responsibility for peace and security (Yabi, 2010).

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#### 4. Methodology

This study is a corpus based description of the use of language in peacekeeping agreement texts. The research adopted both a quantitative and qualitative method in the analysis of the data selected for the study. The quantitative analysis involves frequency count of the structural features under investigation to establish their regularity of occurrence in the corpus. The purpose of accounting for their regularity of occurrence in the text was to enable a discourse-based description of language in use.

The corpus on which this study is based was purposively collected from the record or official files of the Mediation and Security Council arm of ECOWAS. A total of ten (10) peace agreement texts were used as the corpus of this study. The table below gives a brief description of the corpus.

**Table 1: ECOWAS Peacekeeping Agreement (EPKA) Texts**

Tag	Title of Agreement	Year	Words
T1	Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia.	June, 2003	355
T2	Joint Declaration of the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles.	July, 2003	1,112
T3	Peace Agreement Between The Government of Liberia (GOL), The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and The Political Parties.	August, 2003	1,318
T4	Agreement Defining the Operations, Composition and Status Of ECOMOG on the Territory of the (Republic Of Guinea Bissau between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Republic of Guinea Bissau.	March, 1999	1,853
T5	Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone.	July, 1999	2,627
T6	Ceasefire agreement in Guinea-Bissau.	August, 1998	1,785
T7	Agreement between the Government of Guinea Bissau and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta.	November, 1998	233
T8	Economic Community of West African States six-month peace plan for Sierra Leone.	October, 1997	234
T9	Abuja Agreement to Supplement the Cotonou and Akosombo Agreements as subsequently clarified by the Accra Agreement.	August, 1995	271
T10	Cotonou Agreement.	July, 1993	
	Total		22,316

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As shown in the Table 1, the data collected span a period of 10 years (1993 to 2003). ECOWAS was established in 1975. At the time of its establishment, its main objective was the economic integration of its Member States. However, boundary disputes, periods of civil unrest in many African nations, and enduring tensions between the French-speaking and English-speaking states impeded the actualization of its goals. These led to the need to gradually attach greater importance to peace, defence and security issues (Brown, 1999). ECOWAS Community of Justice was created in 1991 and later revised in 1993 to empower the organization to engage in peace negotiations within its region. Thus, the data collected covers the periods ECOWAS had the legal authority to engage in peace negotiations amongst its Member States.

Given the above premise, two main criteria are used for the selection of texts for this study and they are: representativeness and accessibility. Representativeness accounts for the fact that the selected texts represent the discourse of ECOWAS peacekeeping mediation and negotiation. Accessibility on the other hand refers to the extent to which the texts are accessible to the researcher. It refers to the ease by which the researcher obtained the texts from the record or official files of ECOWAS. According to Nwogu (1990) accessibility may be taken to mean the ease with which the researcher can obtain the texts that constitute the corpus of a particular study or may be construed to mean the extent of knowledge which the researcher has about the content of the discourse. Thus, the identification and selection of the representative texts used for the corpus of the study are based on accessibility of their sources as well as those that the researcher can analyse based on linguistic knowledge and the approach to linguistic analysis adopted in the study.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Structural Layout of EPKA Texts

EPKA texts can be considered as a sub-genre of legal discourse. They are drafted for special purposes and could be used in case of litigation. EPKA texts may not apply to what Finke (2004) refers to as “primary sources of law”; however, they are designed to lay down laws for the negotiation of peace and the resolution of conflicts for the people involved. And the texts could be used by legal specialists to enforce the rule of law in relation to the given situations, especially to determine legal rights of those involved.

Though EPKA texts vary from other professional legal texts such as Codes, Statutes, Wills and Deeds, but, like them; EPKA agreements are drafted to reflect certain conventions or norms. These norms include paragraphing, indentation, and graphitic choices, viz.: capitalizing, italicizing, underlining and bold-typing. Crystal and Davy (1986) refer to the general layout of legal texts as “solid block”. This is also applicable to EPKA texts. Solid block is characterized by long lines that are drawn from margin to margin and without any use of spacing or indentation to indicate the limits of the paragraphs or the relation between them. So, it is common to find in the EPKA discourse an entire document in the form of one single sentence. In order to simplify the information presented in this complex layout, EPKA drafters



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make good use of certain graphitic choices which render the texts cohesive and coherent.

EPKA texts are organized in block of scripts with main divisions and subdivisions. Specifically, EPKA texts are divided into parts, articles, paragraphs and clauses. The articles are usually numbered in upper case Arabic numerals while the paragraphs and clauses under the articles are numbered in lower case Roman and Arabic numerals. Information is structured into divisions within the EPKA texts as titles, the preamble (or commencement or premises), the enacting words, definitions, the parts, articles, sections, date and signatures. These divisions serve to indicate the logical presentation of information and progression of ideas. The layout of EPKA texts shares the same similarity and conforms to the usual conventions of the macrostructure appropriate to legal discourse as postulated in the work of Varo and Hughes (2002).

**Example 1:** *Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia*

### **PREAMBLE**

*We the Parties to this Agreement;*

*CONSIDERING Article 52 of the UN Charter on regional arrangements for dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action;*

### **HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:**

*To declare and observe a ceasefire beginning 0001 hours on 18th June 2003.*

*Political Reconciliation. The signing of this agreement shall be followed immediately by the engagement of the GOL, LURD and MODEL with all other Liberian political parties and stakeholders in dialogue, to seek, within a period of thirty (30) days, a comprehensive peace agreement. The peace agreement shall amongst other issues, cover the following: -*

*(a) Deployment of an international stabilization force;*

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, *the duly authorized representatives of the Parties have signed the Agreement.*

*Done at Accra (Ghana), this 17th Day of June 2003 in nine (9) originals in the English language.*

*Signatures: (T1)*

From the extract above, information in the EPKA texts are organized into structural divisions and lists which make it easier to understand the subject-matter, to discern different parts of the text, and to emphasize its significant portions. Also, the structural division of EPKA texts into lists and articles also makes for easy referencing of the different sections of the agreements.

## **5.2 Graphological Features of EPKA Discourse**

There are conspicuous uses of special layout features in the EPKA texts which carry a good deal of discourse information. Features such as punctuation marks, abbreviations,

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capitalization, emboldening and enumeration are particularly significant in this regard. Their percentage breakdown in the data is tabulated in Tables 1 and 2 below. The tables display the occurrences of the graphological features in the data. The punctuation feature holds nine (9) additional features (punctuation markers) found stylistically relevant in the texts, *viz.* comma (,), full stop (.), colon (:), semi-colon (;), quotation marks (“ or ”), slash (/), hyphen (-), apostrophe (') and parentheses (()). These features of punctuation are individually as important as other graphological features.

The analysis revealed that ‘comma and ‘initial letter capitalization’ (16% and 15%, correspondingly) carry the highest percentage of graphological features in the data; these are followed by ‘word capitalizations (12.7%), ‘full stop’ (12.3%) and ‘bold’ (12.0%). ‘Abbreviations’ followed closely (8.3%). ‘Underline (0.6%), apostrophe (0.7%), ‘slash’ (0.8%) and colon (0.9%), on the other hand, are the least prominent features, followed by ‘quotation marks’ (1.7%), ‘lists’ (2.0%) and ‘hyphen (2.8%). Among the moderately used features are: ‘semi-colon (3.0%), ‘centralization’ (4.5%) and ‘parenthesis’ (6.7%).

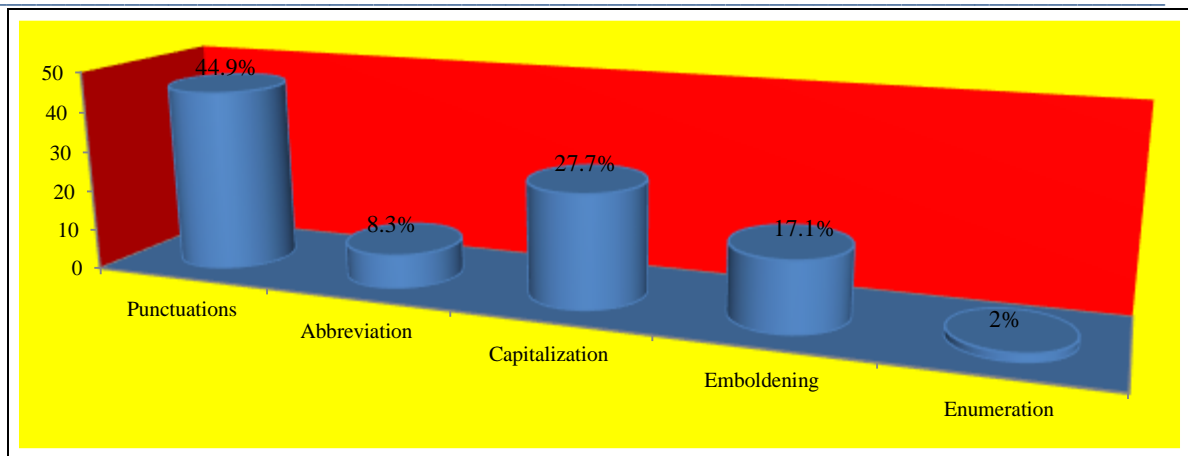
Table 2: Distribution of Graphological Features across the Ten EPKA Texts

Graphological Features		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Total
No. of Words		1068	1060	6805	6039	5810	234	228	930	671	3664	26509
Punctuations	Comma	50	77	321	286	216	5	11	29	14	138	1147
	Full Stop	34	11	331	179	139	5	8	40	36	109	892
	Colon	4	1	17	10	11	2	1	7	2	7	62
	Semi-Colon	28	0	86	33	38	5		1	0	23	214
	Dash	9	4	48	27	38	6	4	7	7	54	204
	Slash	2		5	4	37		1	1	3	5	58
	Parenthesis	43		104	79	80	16	4	18	20	126	490
	Apostrophe	1	21	10	10	9				2	1	54
	Quotation Marks	3	0	70	50	2				2	2	127
Abbreviation	Initialism/Acronym	5	3	287	132	92	2	4	16	19	45	605
Capitalization	Initial Letter	90	90	287	135	138	40	39	66	103	93	1,081
	Word	28	3	310	182	180	3	29	39	17	130	921
Emboldening	Bold	79	18	320	170	120	7	25	3		126	868
	Centralization	2	1	40	80	120	4	4	5	22	53	331
	Underline				2		1	2	17	24		46
Enumeration	Lists	3	1	52	26	27	2	1	3	8	20	143
Total												7,243



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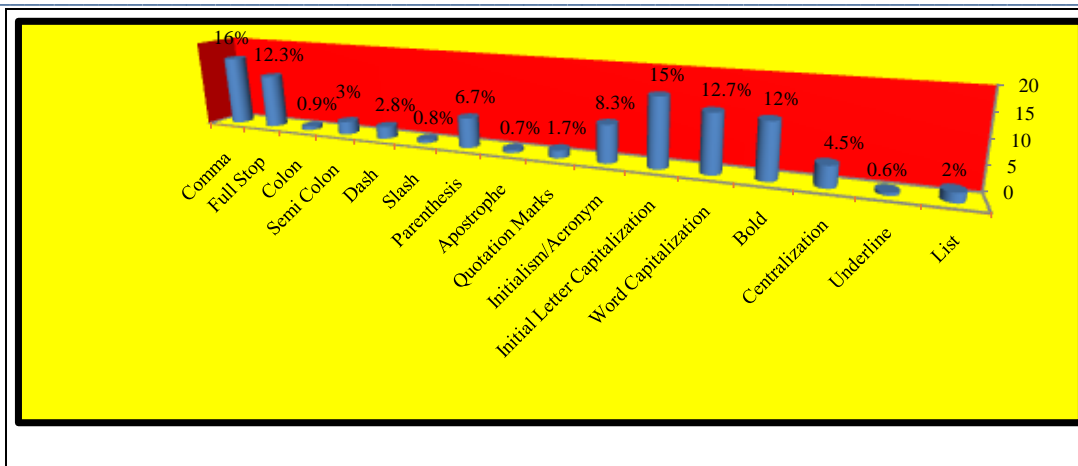
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**Figure 1: Chart Showing the Percentage Distribution of Graphological Features of EPKA Texts**

**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Graphological Features in the EPKA Texts**

S/N	Features	Type	Frequency Distribution	Percentage
1	Punctuations	Comma	1147	16.0%
		Full Stop	892	12.3%
		Colon	62	0.9%
		Semi-Colon	214	3.0%
		Dash	204	2.8%
		Slash	58	0.8%
		Parenthesis	490	6.7%
		Apostrophe	54	0.7%
		Quotation Marks	127	1.7%
2	Abbreviation	Initialism/Acronym	605	8.3%
3	Capitalization	Initial Letter	1,081	15.0%
		Word	921	12.7%
4	Emboldening	Bold	868	12.0%
		Centralization	331	4.5%
		Underline	46	0.6%
5	Enumeration:	Lists	143	2.0%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>7,243</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 2: Chart Showing Percentage Distribution of Graphological Features of EPKA Texts**

### 5.3 Discussion of the Graphological Features

It is very important that graphological feature of any EPKA texts such as words, phrases and even sentences are centralized, capitalized, underlined and bolded for emphasis and to indicate the significance of the divisions, sub-divisions and sections within the EPKA texts. The general layout of the data examined above reveals that EPKA texts adopt paragraph divisions, these divisions are made coherent by the use of indentation and other graphetics listed in Tables 1 and 2.

One prominent structural characteristic of EPKA texts is the frequent use of punctuation marks. Punctuation marks are used to segment the texts in question into smaller meaningful units. Without these marks, it would be more challenging to get information from the EPKA texts. The punctuation markers used in the data, as outlined in Table 2 are colons, semi-colons, hyphens, apostrophe, quotation marks, slashes, parentheses, full stops and commas. These punctuation features (put together, equal 3,209 instances) are a little lesser than the other four graphological features (abbreviation, capitalization, emboldening, and enumeration put together with 3,985 instances).

The high occurrence of punctuation in the EPKA texts contrasts greatly with the paucity of punctuation that most private legal texts, such as, wills, deeds, etc. are characterized by (see Crystal and Davy, 1986). Despite the fact that not all the features hold much promise of discourse relevance, one important stylistic fact is that each one of them contributes to the uniqueness of the EPKA text; and this single fact pull attention to all of them. In the analysis, attention is paid to the use of abbreviations and punctuation marks in the EPKA texts.

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## 5.3.1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase and it constitutes 8.3% of the graphological features of the entire corpus. Two types of abbreviations are frequently used in EPKA texts, these are initialism and acronym. Instances of their occurrence in the corpus are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Examples of Abbreviations in EPKA Texts

Tag	Initialism	Meaning	Acronym	Meaning
T1	<i>JVT</i>	Joint Verification Team	<i>LURD</i>	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
T2	<i>UN</i>	United Nations	<i>ECOMICI</i>	ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
T3	<i>GRC</i>	Governance Reform Commission	<i>MODEL</i>	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
T4	<i>OAU</i>	Organization of African Unity	<i>ECOMOG</i>	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
T5	<i>CMC</i>	Cease-fire Monitoring Committee	<i>ECOWAS</i>	Economic Community of West African States

From the extracts above, it is clear that the importance of abbreviations in the discourse cannot be over-emphasized. This is because abbreviations are a great way to keep EPKA texts concise and economical as they save time and space. However, it is important to use them correctly. While it is true that abbreviations are meant to make things easier for the writer and the reader, they become a source of problem in interpreting meaning when their meanings are not made clear in the texts. There is inconsistency in the way the meanings of abbreviations are revealed in EPKA texts. In T3, for example, a section called “Definition” is given where the meanings of all the abbreviations used in that particular agreement are well spelt out (see extract below).

**Example 2: ARTICLE I**  
**DEFINITIONS**

*For the purpose of this Agreement:*

*“AU” means the African Union;*

*“Ceasefire Agreement” means the Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by the GOL, the LURD and the MODEL on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003;*

*“CMC” means the Contracts and Monopolies Commission;*

*“DDRR” means Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration;*

*“ECOWAS” means the Economic Community of West African States; (T3)*

But in T5, abbreviations are enclosed within parenthesis upon their first usage in the agreement as can be seen below:

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**Example 3: *HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:***

1. *To declare and observe a ceasefire beginning 0001 hours on 18th June 2003.*
2. *To refrain from committing any act that might constitute or facilitate a violation of the ceasefire as provided for in paragraph 9 of this agreement.*
3. *Joint Verification Team (JVT). To establish an ECOWAS-led JVT comprised of two representatives from each of the parties plus representatives of the UN, AU, and ICGL. (T1)*

In the above extract, JVT is introduced into the discourse structure immediately after its full meaning. Analysis of instances of abbreviations in the data further reveals the presence of abbreviations whose meanings were not revealed upon their first introduction in the texts. The table below shows such usage.

**Table 5: Examples of Abbreviations without Meanings**

Tag	Abbreviations
T1	UN, AU, MODEL, LURD
T2	MINUCI, ECOMICI, UNICORN
T3	ECOWAS
T4	ECOMOG
T5	ECOWAS, JMC, AFRC, SLA, NEC, SL, UN, OAU
T10	IGNU, NPRAG

The implication of introducing abbreviations without first defining their meanings in EPKA text has the potentials of hindering meaning comprehension on the part of the reader. And, as such, encourages the exclusion of meanings that could have been arrived at by the reader and in the long run, it has a potential of rendering some parties powerless in the peace negotiation process.

**5.3.2 Punctuation Marks**

Of all the punctuation marks used in the corpus, comma constitutes 16.0% (1147 instances) of the graphological features of the corpus. It is used in the data in different ways. According to Johnson (1991:94), the function of the comma is very simple; it separates one word, phrase, or clause from another. Its importance becomes apparent especially in longer sentences where it helps the reader to pay closer attention to the relationships between phrases and items in a list. And as Peters (2004:115) points out, commas are separators and indicators of where there is a pause, if the text is read aloud. Analysis of the corpus reveals that commas are employed in EPKA texts in the following ways:

To separate items in a list of more than two items in a clause. For example:

**Example 4:** *Considering that diversity of communities, traditions, cultures, beliefs and*

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*opinions is a source of wealth. (T2)*

In the above extract, comma is used to separate the items ‘communities’, ‘traditions’, ‘cultures’, and ‘beliefs’ to show that the list contains four separate categories of items.

To separate coordinated main clauses. For example:

**Example 5: Locations.** *Each party shall identify the locations of its units including combat equipment, and communicate this information to the JVT in writing within 72 hours of the signature of this agreement. (T1)*

In this sentence, the comma after ‘*equipment*’ marks the separation between the two coordinated clauses in the sentence but the use of comma in this example is not necessary.

To mark the beginning and end of a sub-clause in a sentence. For example:

**Example 6:** *Considering that sanctions/embargoes will be strictly enforced throughout the period of the implementation of the Sierra Leone peace plan, the flows of humanitarian assistance beginning on 14 November 1997 will continue to be monitored by ECOMOG and United Nations military observers. (T8)*

In the above extract, comma is used to mark off the underlined sub-clause from the main clause. The sub-clause underlined above is an adverbial clause of reason. It is used here to enable the reader understand why ECOMOG and United Nations military observers will continue to monitor the flow of humanitarian assistance in the given period.

To set off appositive phrase as can be seen in the example below:

**Example 7:** *Recognizing that refugees, particularly those in neighbouring countries, may wish to return voluntarily following the cessation of hostilities, UNHCR assistance should begin from 1 December 1997. (T8)*

After certain kinds of introductory words.

**Example 8:** *Nevertheless, it is recognized that for an enduring peace to be restored which will enjoy the support of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and the confidence of the subregion, efforts should be made to ensure that an all-inclusive Government is evolved. (T8)*

When a sentence begins with a word which does not form part of the clause which follows it, a comma usually appears after the word. These are usually words or combinations of two words inserted in EPKA texts to indicate to the reader how the rest of the sentence is to be understood and how it relates to the previous sentence. Examples of such words found in the data include: *however, therefore, nevertheless and furthermore and in witness whereof*. The extract above is an example of such usage.

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The analysis of the different ways that comma is employed in EPKA texts above appears tidy and uncomplicated, however, a closer investigation reveals some instances of very complex usage. The sort of complexity that the use of comma creates in the EPKA texts is shown below:

**Example 9:** *The number of ECOMOG troops shall depend on its mandate and experience, the size of the Territory, the size of the population, the duration of the operations, the capacity of the contributing countries, the time it takes to restore mutual trust among the parties to the conflict, and how soon the joint Commission referred to in Article 4 paragraph 2(vii) of this Agreement is established. (T4)*

The use of comma in the extract above can be considered superfluous. The precision and clarity which the use of comma is supposed to achieve is lost as a result of its over-use. The above sentence would have been clearer if the items separated by the use of comma were itemized. Commas are unsuitable for such long lists in a sentence, so, they should not be used as an alternative to using short sentences. Another instance where comma seems to be inappropriately used in EPKA texts is shown below:

**Example 10:** *Considering that Côte d'Ivoire has suffered enough from the war into which it was plunged on 19 September 2002,  
Considering that the people's pain and distress must be brought to an immediate end,  
Considering that all conflicts must necessarily be resolved through dialogue and cooperation,  
Considering that every new death is pointless and further complicates national reconciliation,  
Considering that partitioning Côte d'Ivoire, even briefly, would not be to the advantage of any of the parties,  
Considering that war can be justified only in order to defend values connected to the general and collective interest and that only the latter may justify the sacrifice of a combatant,  
Considering that Côte d'Ivoire is the common asset of all Ivoirians and, as such, represents the general interest to be defended come what may,  
Considering that diversity of communities, traditions, cultures, beliefs and opinions is a source of wealth,  
Considering that Côte d'Ivoire's viability lies in its economy and that this economy has been damaged by more than eight months of war, (T2)*

As revealed earlier, the general layout of a typical EPKA document contains a segment referred to as "Preamble". The preamble section of EPKA text is used to present a premise upon which the agreements drawn up in the documents are based. Most of the clauses and sentences within the preamble are usually set off from one another through the use of semi-colon. However, in T2 for example, each of these clauses is linked to one another with the use of a comma instead of a more appropriate semi-colon which offers a slightly longer grammatical pause than the comma.

Used as a grammatical pause, the comma, when used in a text, inevitably slows down the reading pace. This attribute of a comma makes it attractive to the drafters of EPKA texts



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because it is very important that agreements drawn up in the EPKA documents are not read and signed in a rush. Although the comma is used more frequently than any other punctuation mark, the rules of its use can be quite obscure to most language users. And this attribute may account for its superfluous use in EPKA texts.

Punctuation marks generally make for organized structure as well as for effective thought flow in any piece of written text, which facilitates meaningful and efficient reading. The analysis in this section, therefore, demonstrates that punctuation is also a marked or significant graphological feature in the text, as it helps in emphasizing and foregrounding of meaning. The punctuation markers often employed in the data for these purposes are the slashes, parenthesis and hyphens. Slashes, parenthesis, and hyphens (58, 490 and 204 instances, in the same order) are some of the punctuation tools through which efforts and space are saved and managed in the EPKA texts. Slashes and parentheses are used to indicate alternatives in the text, for example:

**Example 11:** *The Violation Committee shall invite the violating party/(ies) for the purpose of having such party/(ies) take corrective measures to cure the violations within such time-frame as may be stipulated by the Committee. (T10)*

Instead of going through the rigorous process of repeating, for instance, “*The Violation Committee shall invite the violating party or parties for the purpose of having such party or parties take corrective measures to cure the violations within such time-frame as may be stipulated by the Committee*”, with the skilful use of slash and parenthesis, effort and space are saved in the texts. Hyphens are used to string together two or more terms to form compound words, which in normal circumstances, are written separately. For example, “confidence-building” (Text 1, line 128), “Linac-Marcoussis Agreement” (Text 2, line 23), “non-elective” (Text3, line 208), time-frame (Text 10, line 94).

The information-giving nature of the EPKA discourse accounts for the minimal use of quotation marks (127 instances) and apostrophes (23 instances) in the corpus. While apostrophe is mainly used to show possession in the texts, quotation marks are majorly used to enclose abbreviations. for example, “ECOWAS” (T4, Line 2) and it is also used to draw attention to operationally defined terms in the data as shown by the extract below:

**Example 12:** “CMC” means the Contracts and Monopolies Commission; (T3)

Generally, the primary economy of efforts and space created by the use of these five punctuation marks gives precision and promptness to the EPKA discourse.

Colons and semi-colons (62 and 214 instances, respectively) are another set of punctuation marks that are utilized that further show the distinctiveness of the EPKA texts. The traditional tendency of enumerating certain vital points (for clarity), which is characteristic of EPKA texts, accounts for most of the uses of colons and semi-colons in the data. While colons are used to introduce more information within a paragraph or to initiate items on a list, semi-colons are normally used to separate the parts of a complicated sentence or items in a detailed list, aiding a pause that is longer than comma’s but shorter than a full stop. However, the

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popular pattern in the data is placing the semi-colons within a vertical line to connect complex clauses in a list. Generally, while the use of semi-colons, like commas, gives an experience of pauses as in actual performance, colon and enumeration are jointly used to indicate the logic in the EPKA discourse – to list the facts and achieve exactness of meaning.

### 6. Conclusion

The investigation into the discourse structure of the corpus revealed that EPKA discourse is organized in block of scripts with main divisions and subdivisions. The texts are divided into parts, articles, paragraphs and clauses through the devices of punctuations. Punctuation marks are used to segment the texts in question into smaller units. Without them it would be more challenging to get information from the EPKA texts.

In conclusion, graphological features are employed in the data for the purpose of emphasizing and foregrounding of meaning. Graphetics in the corpus also serves as a useful tool through which efforts and space are saved and managed in the EPKA texts. And, the primary economy of efforts and space created by the use of graphetics in the corpus give precision and promptness to the EPKA discourse.

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