

From Social Media English to Academic English: Analysis of Surface Errors in Undergraduate ESL Students' Writing

Joyce S. A. Anku PhD, Abraham Kwadwo Okrah PhD

Department of Teacher Education, School of Education and Leadership, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of university students' social media linguistic practices on their academic communication. Specifically, it was concerned with their ability to recognize and keep to the formal-informal styles of communication effortlessly. Questionnaires, containing natural sample social media chats and containing varied informal features authored by university students, were used as the main data collection instruments. Findings revealed that most of the respondents are unable to transition between the formal – informal divide successfully. Among the micro-level writing errors investigated, punctuation errors were seen to be pervasive, and followed, in the order, by contracted forms, capitalisation, word choice and spelling. The study recommends that equal emphasis be placed on the teaching of lower order academic writing concerns by relevant academic departments or centres.

KEYWORDS: Social Media English, University Students, Surface Errors, Social Media Language/Communication, Academic Communication/English

How to cite this paper: Joyce S. A. Anku | Abraham Kwadwo Okrah "From Social Media English to Academic English: Analysis of Surface Errors in Undergraduate ESL Students' Writing" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-5 | Issue-1, December 2020, pp.1384-1393, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd38169.pdf



Copyright © 2020 by author (s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



1. INTRODUCTION

Language is said to be dynamic (Jantsch, 2012). Dynamism in language in itself may occur for the sake of negotiating, establishing and maintaining "relationships within and between constantly changing societies (or broadly speaking cultures)" (Meyer & Fruhwirth, 2005:247). Due to the dynamism associated with language, the same linguistic item may have varied meanings, so may an existing linguistic item assume different meaning, form and function over time, hence the need to use appropriate language in its applicable context.

Evidently, as a result of complex interactions among certain "individual, group-immanent and institutional factors" (Meyer&Fruhwirth, 2005:247), new contextual usages for language emerge daily. One of such new communicative contexts is the social media. Social media is a technologically motivated medium of communication which differs from the traditional face to face communication, and the mass media. Social media can also be referred to as any web based platform that allows for creation and exchange of user-generated content (Smith, 2009; Taprial & Kanwar, 2012; Walters, 2010). It is a multiple-tasked platform where 'patrons' are able to create content, share with others and consume other patrons' content.

Obviously, there seems to be a strong connection between technological advancement and changes in language. This is evident in the days of the telegraph when new linguistic

forms and structures were invented – language had to be adapted to meet the changing demands of technology (mainly the use of content words to form sentences). Then came the GSM services were also new linguistic forms had to be devised to satisfy the demands of the new technology.

From the beginning of the 21st Century, there has been a major revolution in the domain of media and communication – that is, the introduction of the internet. The emergence of the internet has shifted a considerable attention from the traditional media; even though it has not entirely rendered the traditional media redundant, it has introduced a new, perhaps somehow defined, line of communication.

This phenomenon has revolutionalized to the extent that there have been some predictions by some linguists that the world most documented language, English, may soon record its greatest transformation (Eastment, 1999; Gupta, 1997; Modarresi, Rezvan & Kahani, 2010; Paolillo, 1999; Wu & Ben-Cannan, 2006) largely because it is the most affected among the world's languages due to certain known factors such as globalization.

A major concern is how the adoption of the new order of social media communication by students, especially, will affect the quality of teaching and learning of English in non-native English speaking countries, like Ghana, which have English as an official language. Accordingly, this empirical

study explores the effects of social media linguistic conventions on students' academic communication. The study, however, examined only linguistic choices that occur at the micro-level of writing. This is further delineated to punctuation, contracted word forms, capitalisation, word choice, and spelling errors. The study, therefore, seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the nature of Ghanaian university students' linguistic choices on social media? How do university students reconstruct their linguistic choices on social media in formal linguistic domain? Which micro-level linguistic elements of Ghanaian university students are mostly affected by their social media linguistic choices?

2. An overview of the linguistic landscape of Ghana

Ghana is a multilingual country with about 79 indigenous languages (Lewis, 2009). An average Ghanaian is proficient in at least two of the indigenous languages. The majority of the citizenry are proficient in at least one indigenous language and in the English language. There is, however, no known or generally accepted national language in Ghana, even though one or two of the indigenous languages are close to meeting all the requisite requirements for a national language.

Due to the inability to promote an indigenous language to the status of national language and to serve other equally important linguistic functions, English, an Indo-European language, and also as an inheritance of colonialism serves multiple functions in Ghana. For example, English in Ghana, serves as the official language for government's communications, national language, language of instruction, and as well as lingua franca.

English is also, predominantly, a recognised second language for most Ghanaians. From senior high school to the university level, English is the only language requirement for admission. Job applications are mostly written in English and interviews are usually conducted in English.

Also, the policy on English as a medium of instruction is relatively fixed from upper primary to the university level. That is to say, apart from the lower primary where the language of instruction alternates between the local languages and English (depending on the policy of the ruling government) the English language in Ghana has been the official language of education since independence (Owu-Ewie, 2006; Anyidoho, 2018; Klu & Ansre, 2018).

3. The standard of English in Ghana

Despite the prestige associated with the English language in Ghana, there have been concerns of its declining standard by teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Reports on the National Education Assessment conducted by the Ghana Education Service in 2011 indicated that pupils perform poorly in English; admittedly, that has been the trend over the years (National Education Assessment Report, 2012).

According to the West African Examination Council (2008), most candidates at the senior high school level were unable to communicate their thoughts clearly and logically in the examinations. The Council attributed this to teachers' attitude to the teaching of the language, large number of students in class, and poor grounding in grammar, particularly in basic mechanics.

Indeed, for the 2012/2013 West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSSCE), only 43.06 % obtained credit and above in English language. Again, out of 242,162 candidates who sat for the 2013/2014 West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations, only 28.11% had passes in all subjects including English; while in 2016, an alarming 45% of candidates failed the English paper. Unlike the previous reports, which attribute the possible causes of students' failure in the WASSSCE to factors such as teachers' attitude, large class size and poor grounding in grammar, students' poor performance in the 2016 WASSSCE and for subsequent years was blamed partly on students' engagement on social media platforms; the Chief Examiner's report indicates that traces of social media language were evident in some students' examination scripts.

This is an indication that despite the communicative value of social media platforms, students, who form about 95% of active participants of internet and social media users (Diederich, 1998; Wu & Ben-Canaan, 2006), are not able to keep to the informal-formal divide, which suggests that students lack basic communicative competence.

4. Method

4.1. Research design

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive design in order to provide a quick and precise description of the phenomenon (Sandelowski, 2000). This was supported by the theory of error analysis. Specifically, procedures of Coder's (1981) framework of error analysis were followed to account for the errors. First, there was an initial casual observation of social media sites to appreciate the novel linguistic choices on social media and to confirm theoretical descriptions of social media language as largely informal (Jimma, 2017; Szurawitzki, 2012; Baron, 2008). It must however be noted that this early stage of observation was only for purposes of understanding the terrain of social media linguistic practices. Next, samples of social media chats authored by students and re-written into formal English were obtained. In addition, language errors that commonly occur in students' writing and which are also largely evident in social media discourse were identified. The errors preselected have been identified as signaling some systematic violations of pattern mostly in social media domain (CARLA, 2019). Lastly, the common errors and their sub-types were categorized, explained and evaluated.

4.2. Population and sample size

The participants for this study were university undergraduate students drawn from the University of Ghana. The participants were selected purposefully and the selection process cut across all disciplines. This purposive selection approach is to ensure that participants do not belong to the same academic discipline and also that they are patrons of social media communication. Besides, the selected participants must have taken a two-semester academic writing course – a required course for all students entering the university. Also, participating in the two-semester course meant the research participants were exposed to some guidelines underlying content areas such as the academic essay, formal and informal writing, grammar and usage, deviant usage and commonly confused words, among other language problems. In all, one hundred (100) undergraduate students participated in the study. Out of this number there were thirty-three (33) females representing 32.50 % and 47

males representing 67.50%. The age range was between 18 and 30. All participants indicated they were active members of at least one social media platform.

4.3. Data and instrumentation

The main data for the study came from social media chats authored by the student respondents. Two undergraduate classes made up of forty eight (48) and fifty two (52) students respectively (totalling 100) were asked to provide at least two of their discussions/chats on any two social network. Mindful of the ethical concerns on the use of online data, the researcher took time to explain the objectives of the study to the student respondents. The respondents were also made to understand that they had the right to choose not to participate in the study. They were also given the option to blot out their names and portraits and not to include any chat they deemed highly private or felt uncomfortable sharing with third parties.

In all sixty (60) students (volunteers) out of the one hundred (100) responded with an average of two (2) chats per student totalling 120 chat messages. Even though only slightly more than half of the respondents provided the raw data, all one hundred of them voluntarily responded to the questionnaire. Considering the quantity of messages received, the researcher used purposive and random sampling techniques to sort out messages that contained almost the same features being investigated – punctuation marks, capitalisation, word choice, contracted forms and spelling.

Accordingly, ten (10) sample discussions from different social media platforms authored by students were given out to all one hundred respondents for correction. The respondents were asked to rewrite the sentences correcting errors in word choice, abbreviation, punctuations, spelling and contracted word forms as they would normally do in examinations. The selection of the ten sample chats was done on purpose.

First of all, all the ten (10) chats contained almost all the language elements being investigated. And second, the researchers wanted to give the respondents ample time to think through each chat/sentence carefully to produce the maximum result. Thus, if the chats are many, the probability that respondents would rush through to save time is high. The overall aim of giving out the ten (10) sample chats is to test how conscious students are in negotiating their path from informal to formal writing; that is to say, if the respondents are able to recognise the two contexts and their ability to transcend each at any given time. As indicated

5. Findings

Guided question (1): What is the nature of Ghanaian university students' linguistic choices on social media? The researchers wanted to find out the linguistic features that characterise Ghanaian university students' social media interactions. In order to ascertain this, the researchers studied excerpts of the students' linguistic choices on social media, observed their uniqueness; and thereafter described their characteristics. Samples of the respondents' choices on social media are presented in Figures 1 to 7.

earlier, this was done at the micro level or lower order-level of writing.

4.4. Data Analysis

As indicated earlier, the researchers were concerned with only lower order academic writing elements. These were further delineated to two areas - mechanics and lexical choices. Under mechanics, the researchers were only interested in the use of punctuations, capitalisation and spelling. With regard to lexical choices, the study focused on word choice (confusable words), and contracted word forms which include abbreviations, and related non-standard contracted word forms.

The source of data was largely secondary since the respondents were asked to rewrite the social media posts, which were not originally meant for academic consumption, into formal English. Despite the inadequacy of secondary data as reported by some researchers (Kothari, 2014; Pandey & Pandey, 2015; Subekti, 2018), the secondary source of data employed here adequately supports the objective of the study of investigating students' ability to negotiate the formal-informal divide in writing.

The data was quantified according to the frequency and kinds of errors associated with each chat (but for convenience sake, they are sometimes labelled as sentences or excerpts), and was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

First, responses for each question were generated through the SPSS. It must be noted that the number and kind of errors associated with each question vary and a response is marked as correct if the respondent gets all accurate. Responses that are labelled incorrect are those that failed to account for one or all the errors identified with the particular sentence (See Figure 1 below).

The next step was to generate a frequency distribution for each error type identified. This was useful since it has been able to show the distribution of errors from the most pervasive to the least (See Figure 2 below).

They were presented in the form of sentences for easy understanding of the respondents. Moreover, their presentation in sentence form is in accordance with the structure of examination questions answered by the respondents in their Academic Writing examinations. It must, however, be mentioned that not all the chats represented here can be conveniently referred to as sentences. An appropriate label, excerpt, is used for such occurrences in the discussion.



Figure 1: Respondents' social media chat



Figure 2: Respondents' social media chat

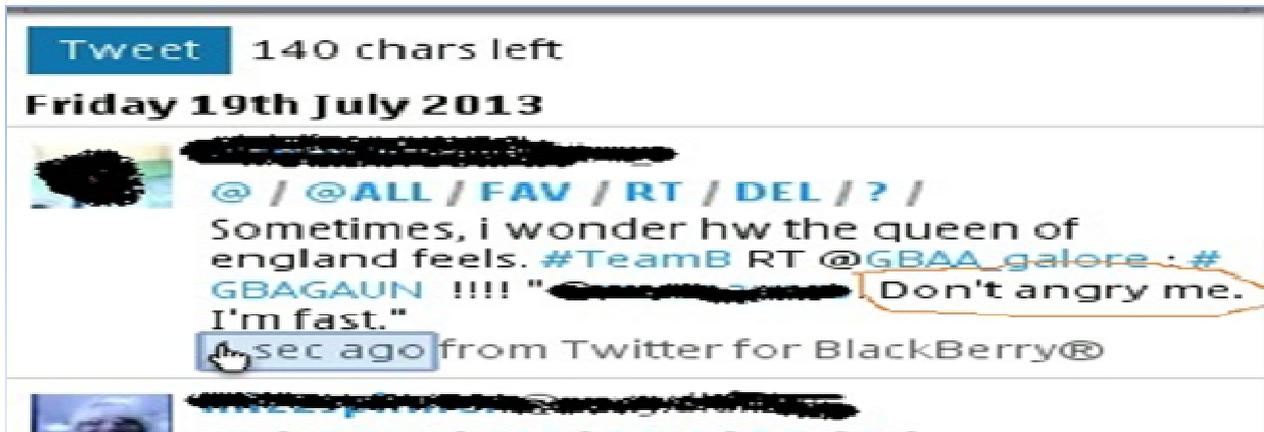


Figure 3: Respondents' social media chat

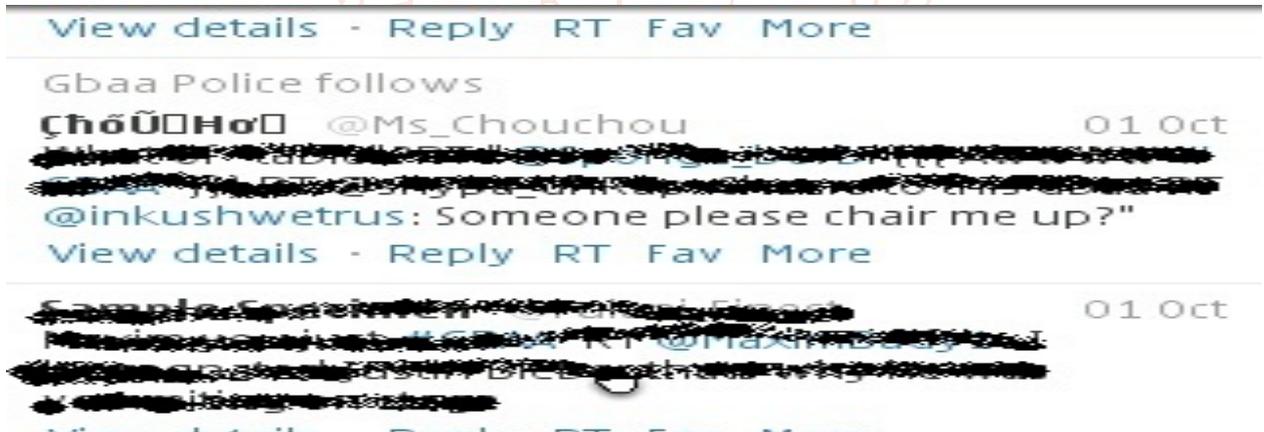


Figure 4: Respondents' social media chat



Figure 5: Respondents' social media chat

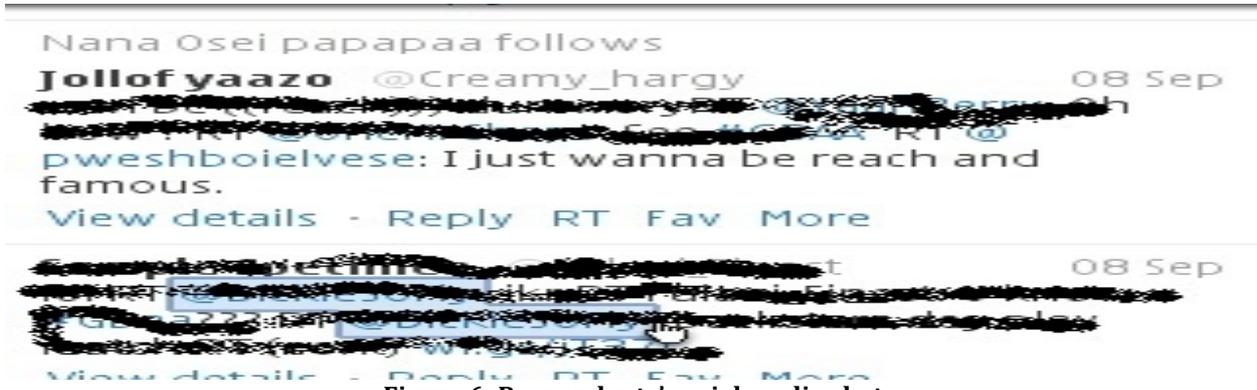


Figure 6: Respondents’ social media chat



Figure 7: Respondents’ social media chat

It was noted that the sample texts revealed the uniqueness of social media interaction which goes to support earlier studies in this domain (Thurlow, 2003; Crystal, 2001; Herring, 2001; Baron, 1998). The nature of Ghanaian university students’ linguistic choices on social media predominantly presents a hybrid form of speech and writing (Crystal, 2004), and it as well deviates from traditional grammar rules (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004). The notable features include abbreviations and acronyms (Fig.1), truncated sentences (Fig. 7), minimal use of capitalisation (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 5), inappropriate punctuation marks (Fig.1,2,4, 5, 7), homophones (Fig.4, 6) and wrong word choice (Fig. 3,4,5, 6) What is worth mentioning is that, barring any unconscious transfer to formal communicative domains, these choices are perfectly appropriate within the scope of social media or other informal domains

Guided question (2): How do Ghanaian university students reconstruct the linguistic choices on social media in a formal linguistic domain? Here, the respondents wanted to find out if the respondents are able to observe the defined boundaries of social media and academic communication. The respondents were instructed to re-write the following sample chats from social media in the appropriate formal language as they would in an examination context:

Table 1: Excerpts from social media chats

Item	Excerpts
A	'I dont fel lik eating vegetable egan'
B	'i trust no man God is My refuge'
C	'You are not serious... why are u justice atuguba you people should know the kind of women should associate yourself with is a lesson to you boy.'
D	'Dnt sleep wif her if u knw u wunt marry her,wat is d essence of jss1-ss3 if u knw u wunt write waec.'
E	'My night was find.'
F	'PASS me NOT OH GENTL SEVIOUR HEAR MA HUMBL PRAYER!'
G	'it is late but am not feeling slippery'
H	'Mass, english and economics'
I	'Am going true my facebook pics'
J	'Good lack to all wassce candidates'

The information in Figure 8 below indicates the number of correct/incorrect sentences produced by respondents when asked to revise the social media chats from their informal state to a more formal state as they would do when writing in a formal domain.

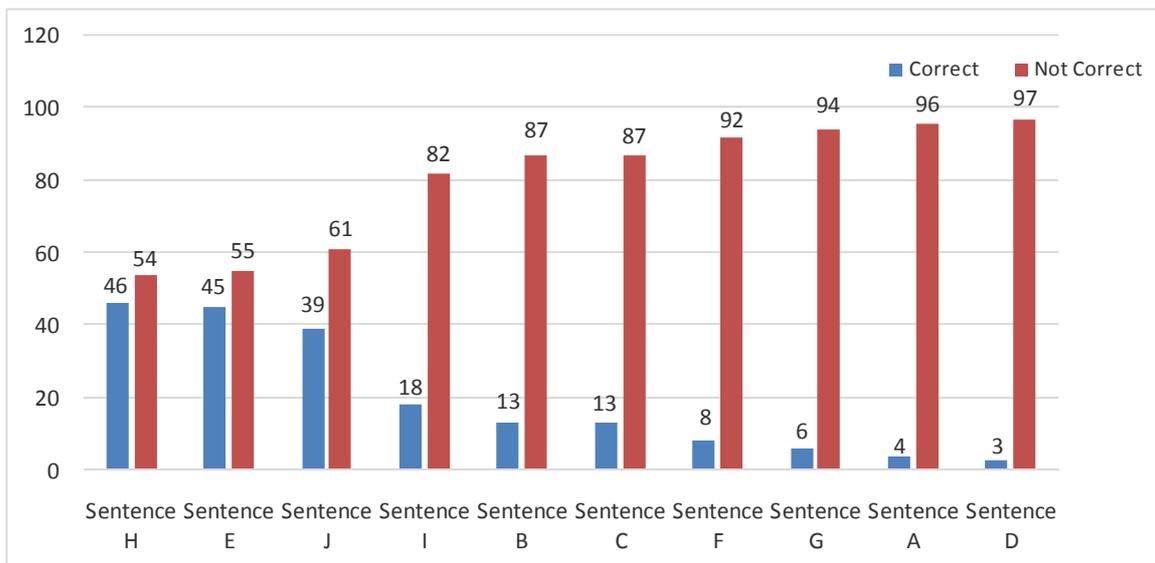


Figure 8: Number of correct and incorrect sentences

For sentence A ('I dont fel lik eating vegetable egan'), 96% percent of the respondents had the sentence wrong while 4% had it right. The main issues the respondents could not handle were their inability to introduce appropriate punctuation marks, followed by spelling and contracted forms.

With sentence B ('i trust no man God is My refuge'), punctuation and capitalisation errors were detected and respondents were expected to correct them. While 13% of respondents were able to rewrite the sentence correctly, 87% could not. The major source of error was punctuation followed by capitalisation.

Again, sentence C ('you are not serious... why are u justice atuguba you people should know the kind of women should associate your self with iss a lesson to you boy.') presents 13% correct responses and 87% incorrect ones. Specific errors respondents were expected to rectify include punctuation, spelling, word choice and capitalisation.

For sentence D ('Dnt sleep wif her if u knw u wunt marry her,wat is d essence of jss1-ss3 if u knw u wunt write waec:'), only 3% had the sentence correct; while an alarming 97% had it wrong in one way or the other. Errors associated with this sentence are punctuation, capitalization, spelling and contracted forms.

Also, 45% had sentence E ('My night was find.') correct and 55% had it incorrect. The main source of error is punctuation, followed by word choice. The majority of respondents failed to introduce an appropriate end mark and also an appropriate word to replace the word 'find'.

In addition, sentence F ('PASS me NOT OH GENTL SEVIOUR HEAR MA HUMBL PRAYER!') has recorded 8% correct responses and 92% incorrect responses. Punctuation errors are the main issues here. Minor errors identified include word choice, capitalisation, and spelling.

With regard to sentence G ('it is late but am not feeling slippery'), errors such as punctuation, word choice and capitalisation were identified; 6% were able to revise the sentence accurately while 94% failed to, in either one or all the identified errors. However, 46% were able to re-write the excerpt H ('Mass, english and economics') correctly while 55% failed to do so. Specific errors associated with this excerpt are word choice and capitalisation.

In sentence I ('Am going true my facebook pics'), respondents were expected to correct word choice, punctuation and capitalisation errors. However, only 18% of respondents were able to do this effectively, while 82% of respondents could not. Finally, excerpt J ('Good lack to all wassce candidates') presents errors such as word choice, capitalisation and punctuation. While 39% of respondents were able to identify and correct all these errors, 61% of them failed to do so.

Guided question (3): Which micro-level linguistic elements of Ghanaian university students are mostly affected by their social media linguistic choices?

In response to guided question 3, the respondents' attempt to re-write the social media chats in Table 1 were categorised. This section presents the most occurring errors in the data. The common errors that permeate this part of the study are (1) punctuation, (2) contracted forms, (3) capitalization (4) word Choice, and (5) spelling errors. The findings are presented in Figure 9.

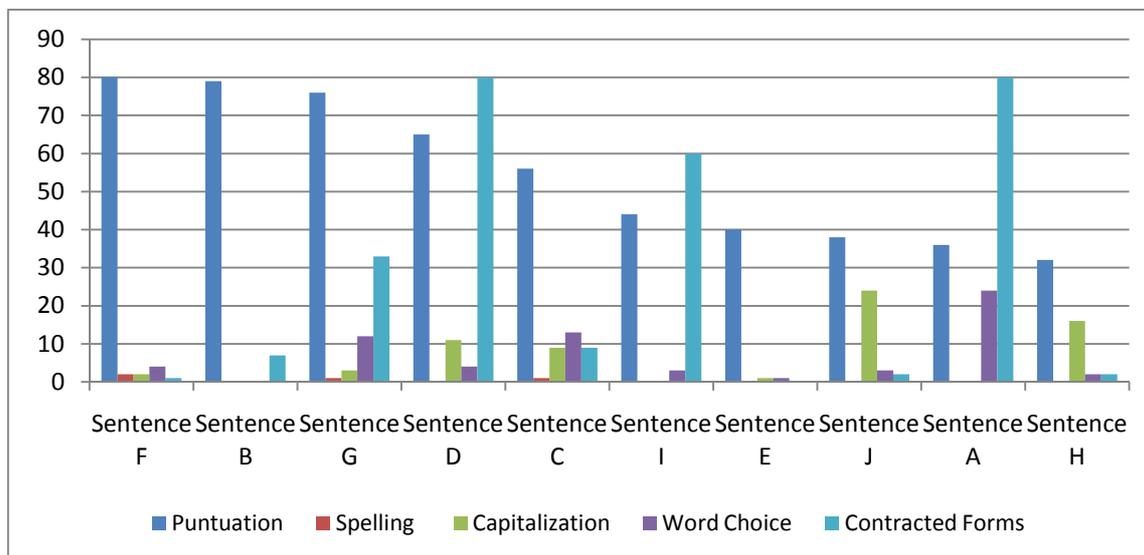


Figure 9: Frequency distribution of errors and their effect of academic writing

Figure 9 shows that the respondents are prone to making punctuation errors more than any of the linguistic choices and usages under investigation. The typical punctuation errors are misuse and absence/omission of end marks, comma and semi-colon.

The second most common error made by the respondents is the use of contracted forms. The use of contracted forms is a feature of informality. Unfortunately, due to its excessive use on social media, most students employ it when writing in formal contexts. An emerging trend, however, is the introduction of non-standard contracted word forms such as “don” for “don’t”, “cant” for “can’t”, and “wunt” for “won’t”.

For ease of coding, non-standard abbreviations were also classified under contracted forms. Common ones that run through both the social media chats and students’ essays include: “u” for “you”, “knw” for “know”, “dnt” for “don’t”, “wif” for “with”, “wat” for “what”, and “pics” or “pix” for “pictures”.

Capitalization

With regard to capitalization, the English language is definite on its rules. But social media discourse defies some of these rules such that words occurring at the initial position in sentences are not capitalized, so are proper nouns. This unfortunately is transposed into formal writing. In the data, rules of capitalization are compromised under two circumstances. The first is when the word to receive capitalization (e.g. proper noun) does not occur at sentence initial or near sentence initial position, it is likely to be ignored by 8 out of 10 students; common forms include names of countries, people, languages, and titles.

The second instance is when the word is a pronounceable acronym, for instance, WAEC /wæɪk/ (West African Examination Council), GNAT /næt/ (Ghana National Association of Teachers) WASSCE /wæsi:/ (West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination). These words as occurred in the data were all written with lower cases. This occurrence may be traced to the introduction of the internet and email discussions where it was seen as offensive to write email messages in all capital letters, but even that the first letter introducing a sentence and proper nouns is usually capitalized. Similar studies on capitalization errors equally revealed names, titles, acronyms and initial-letter abbreviations as common errors among students (Shawnee State University Writing Centre, 2018) while in some cases some students do commit up to 10 capitalization errors (Siddiqui, 2015).

Word choice

Another issue explored was the error associated with word choice. The commonest is the use of confusing/confusable

words. These are tricky words which have no relevance as far as the context is concerned. Often the two words are identical either in spelling or pronunciation. These words are also referred to as homophones. Some examples as recorded in the data include “reach” for “rich”, “its” for “it’s”, “lack” for “luck”, and “slippery” for “sleepy”.

Spelling errors

Lastly, the study also recorded some instances of spelling errors. These spelling errors permeate both the social media chats and students’ writings investigated. Some examples include: “gentil” for ‘gentle’, “seviour” for “saviour”, “fell” for “feel”, “contenent” for “continent”, “libraraly” for “liberally”, “meenings” for “meanings”, “lifes” for “lives”, “existance” for “existence”, and “appoling” for “appauling”.

5.1. Discussion

From the analysis above, it is evident that students are prone to making mechanical errors and errors associated with lexical choices. Accordingly, punctuation, capitalization, contracted word forms, word choice and spelling are the most common errors in these two categories – mechanics and lexical choices. However, it must be stated that the occurrence of the above errors does not arise in isolation. Certain linguistic factors account for each error.

To start with, the structure of the sentence is a determinant of the kind and frequency of error evident in a particular sentence/chat. Since the sentences differ in structure, a critical analysis revealed that the most pervasive errors are tied to the structure of the sentence where sentences with complex structures are associated with higher number of errors than it is in the case of simple sentences. This

corroborates Scott and Balthazar's (2013) finding that syntactic complexities largely contribute to learners' writing and reading problems. Similarly, Subekti (2018) found that students have multiple errors with complex sentences which are mostly long and often associated with run-on clauses.

In the current study, syntactic complexity results in increased punctuation errors. It can therefore be said that respondents lack basic knowledge in sentence structure and punctuation. For instance, most respondents used the comma to separate two independent clauses which results in a comma splice; in some cases, the two independent clauses are fused with no punctuation mark resulting in run-on sentences.

For complex sentences, the study revealed interesting points. A complex sentence had one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. When a complex sentence has one independent clause and one dependent clause, the dependent clause introduced by a subordinator may occur first separated by a comma and followed by the independent clause. An example is "Because God is my refuge, I trust no man".

Conversely, in the English language, when an independent clause occurs at sentence initial position and followed by a dependent clause which is introduced by a subordinator, no comma is used to separate the two clauses.

For example: "I trust no man because God is my refuge".

Interestingly, the data recorded majority of responses separating a dependent clause introduced by a subordinator which is preceded by an independent clause with a comma.

For example: * *I trust no man, because God is my refuge.*
* *Don't sleep with her, if you know you won't marry her.*

Another sentence structure worth considering is the functional interrogative sentence. It was found that the interrogative sentences in the data hardly came with the appropriate end mark. Thus the trend showed that interrogative sentences are mostly punctuated with the period mark and in some circumstances there are no end marks at all. This last observation is true for declarative sentences as well. The data revealed a tendency of omitting the end mark leaving the sentence open. The sample sentences taken directly from the data and represented below support these observations:

It is late but am not feeling sleepy.

Don't sleep with her if you know you won't marry her! What is the essence of ISSI-ISSJ if you know you won't write waec

The first sample sentence does not bear an end mark, the period, while the interrogative sentences in the second and third examples also do not bear the appropriate interrogative mark.

In addition to the concerns raised about students' writing is their spellings of words. This predominantly reflects how

certain English words are pronounced in Ghanaian English. While pronunciation itself cannot be blamed solely for the inconsistencies in spelling in second language situations, pronunciation does play a major role in the way certain English words are written. A typical example is the spelling revolution that occurred in American English spellings. They are based on ease of pronunciation and nothing else. A trend is emerging among second language speakers who, for failing to pause and check the correct spelling of certain words, write the words the way they pronounce them.

For example: "gentil" for "gentle", and "seviour" for "saviour".

As indicated earlier, some of these avoidable spelling errors reveal the respondents' failure to pay particular attention to the spelling conventions of the English language.

5.2. Recommendations

Short term

Language teachers ought to teach the Lower Order Concerns (LOCs) or the micro-level analytical tools of writing. For instance, in most tertiary institutions' attention is on the macro-level analysis (also known as "Higher Order Concerns" - organisation, development, thesis, among others). Thus, there must be a blend in the tuition of both micro and macro level aspects of academic writing.

Since social media writing models largely on speech, students' idiosyncratic social media spellings/writing may either be a reflection of the way they pronounce or hear such words pronounced, which will later be transferred into academic writing. Thus, correct pronunciation through oral English drills ought to be taught at all levels of education and should not be limited to only the senior high schools.

Long term

Academic units responsible for teaching academic writing must organise periodic writing workshops for colleagues in non-language academic departments to assist in correcting students' errors associated with micro-level analysis in their respective subject areas.

Also, university foundation courses should be structured in a way to assign reading exercises to students regularly (since students' responses indicate that they spend very little hours on reading materials outside their curriculum).

6. Conclusion

Students' inability to take immediate cognizance of the formal-informal divide and to be able to transcend the two boundaries almost immediately is a major reason why their academic essays are characterized by such informal language choices. This however can be rectified by introducing more lessons on formal and informal usages and students impressed upon to engage in exercises that require of them to provide formal variants of informal texts. Such reinforcement exercises will help the students to always be mindful of the two genres.

Finally, we must accept the fact that social media has come to stay, so is "Social Media English". Thus, discussions should be on how applied linguists in second language communities can help their students keep to the formal - informal divide successfully.

References

- [1] Anyidoho, A. (2018). Shifting sands: Language policies in education in Ghana and implementation challenges. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 7(2), 225-243.
- [2] Baron, N. (2008). *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] CARLA, (2019). Overview of error analysis. Retrieved 18/6/2019 from https://carla.umn.edu/learnerlanguage/error_analysis.html
- [4] Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and inter language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Crystal, D. (2008). *Txtng: The Gr8 db8*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Davies, J. & Merchant, G. (2007). Looking from the inside out: academic blogging as new literacy. In Lankshear C, Knobel M (eds.) *A New Literacies Sampler*. New York: Peter Lang.
- [8] Diederich, T. (1998). Web use among students continues to rise. Retrieved 19/06/2019 from <http://cnn.com/TECH/computing/9808/31/opstud.idg/index.htm>
- [9] Eastment, D. (1999). *The Internet and ELT: The Impact of the Internet on English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Summertown Publishing.
- [10] Ghana Education Service. (2012). National Education Assessment Reports
- [11] Gupta FA (1997) *The Internet & the English Language*, Paper submitted for the First Conference on Postcolonial Theory, 14th of April 1997.
- [12] Herring, S. C. (2011). *Computer-mediated conversation, Part II. Special issue of Language@Internet*. Retrieved 21/04/2015 from <http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2011>
- [13] Jantsch, J. (2012). Dynamic language - Is spelling, grammar, pronunciation really important? *Philosophy Forums*. Available at <http://forums.philosophyforums.com/thread/54839/>
- [14] Jimma, J. D. (2017). *Language of social media Examination of English as a Lingua Franca in social media*. An unpublished dissertation submitted to the Department of English, School of Humanities, University of Iceland.
- [15] Klu, E.K. & Ansre, M. (2018). An overview of the language-in-education policy in Ghana: Emerging issues. *The Social Sciences*, 13(3), 596-601.
- [16] Kothari, C. R. (2014). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International
- [17] Lewis, M. P. (ed.) (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World (16th ed.)*. SIL International, Dallas: Texas. Available at <http://www.ethnologue.com/16>
- [18] Mathesius, V. (1975). *A Functional Analysis of Present Day English on a General Linguistic Basis*. In Vachek J (ed). The Hague: Mouton De Gruyter.
- [19] Meyer, P.G. & Fruhwirth, A. (2005). *Synchronic English Linguistics: An introduction (3rd ed.)*. Tübingen: G. Narr.
- [20] Modarresi, G., Rezvan, A. & Kahani, S. (2010). The impact of internet on learning English language. *Edulearn10Proceedings* (pp. 5309-5312).
- [21] National Education Assessment Report. (2012). National Education Assessment Report: 2011 Findings. Retrieved 18/06/2019 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278673417_Ghana_National_Educational_Assessment_2011_Findings_Report
- [22] Owu-Ewie, C. (2006). "The language policy of education in Ghana: a critical look at the English-only language policy of education." In Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics, edited by J. Mugane, 76-85. MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- [23] Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M. (2015). *Research methodology: Tools and techniques*. Buzau, Romania: Bridge Center.
- [24] Paolillo, J. (1999). The Virtual Speech Community: Social Network and Language Variation on IRC. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 4(4), Retrieved 6/12/2011 from <http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol4/issue4/paolillo.html>
- [25] Sandelowsk, M. (2000). Focus on research methods: whatever happened to qualitative description. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 23, 334-340.
- [26] Scott, C. M., & Balthazar, C. (2013). The Role of Complex Sentence Knowledge in Children with Reading and Writing Difficulties. *Perspectives on language and literacy*, 39(3), 18-30.
- [27] Shawnee State University Writing Centre. (2018). Capitalisation Errors. Retrieved 19/06/2019 from <http://www.shawnee.edu/offices/writing-center/errors/capitalization-errors.aspx>
- [28] Siddiqui, M. A. (2015). 'Evaluating capitalization errors in Saudi female students' EFL writing at Bisha University'. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 5(1), 232-250.
- [29] Smith. T. (2009). The social media revolution. *International Journal of Market Research* 51 (4) 559-561. doi: 10.2501/S1470785309200773
- [30] Subekti, A. S. (2018). Error Analysis in Complex Sentences Written by Indonesian Students from the English Education Department. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 5(2), 185-203.
- [31] Szurawitzki, M. (2012). Analyzing the Language of Social Networking Sites - An Analysis Model. Proceedings of the 24th Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics. Retrieved 18/06/2019 from <http://www.researchgate.net>

- [32] Taprial, V. & Kanwar, P. (2012). *Understanding Social Media*. Retrieved 2/08/2013 from <http://www.bookboon.com>
- [33] Thurlow, C. (2003). 'Teenagers in communication, teenagers on communication'. *Journal of Language & Social Psychology*, 22(1), 50-57.
- [34] Thurlow, C., Lengel, L. & Tomic, A. (2004). *Computer Mediated Communication: Social interaction and the internet*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- [35] West African Examination Council. (2008). *Chief Examiner's Report. Ghana: Ghana Education Service*
- [36] Walters, J.K. (2010). *The everything guide to Social Media*. USA: Adams Media.
- [37] Wu, L. & Ben-Canaan, D.H. (2006). The impact of globalization and the Internet on English language teaching and learning. *Australian Journal of Education*, Retrieved 14/01/2014 from <http://www.academia.edu>

