

AN ANALYSIS OF GRAPHOLOGICAL ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH ESSAYS OF SELECTED SS 2 STUDENTS OF MAYFLOWER SCHOOL, IKENNE, OGUN STATE

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Abstract

Research in error analysis in learners' compositions has concentrated largely on grammar errors, leaving out graphological errors. This study analysed graphological errors in the English essays of selected Senior Secondary School two (SS2) students of Mayflower School, Ikenne, Ogun State. Using judgmental sampling research methodology through the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE), May 2020 question and the Corder's Error Analysis framework, the data collected were analysed qualitatively by first identifying the graphological errors, categorising, correcting and explaining them. It was discovered that there were clear manifestations of unpardonable graphological errors in punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, syllabification and paragraphing. Punctuation marks were either omitted, wrongly inserted or confused, while words that cannot occupy little spaces at the end of the lines were either wrongly divided into syllables or wrongly hyphenated. There were issues of non-distinction between proper and common nouns, indiscriminate use of capital letters and irregular paragraphing. At the same time, words were also wrongly contracted, forced together, or unlawfully separated in careless spelling and handwriting. These errors mar the students' compositions and negatively affect their performance. It is recommended that teachers of the English language should direct more attention to the teaching of graphology in essay writings to minimise these errors among the students.

Keywords

Capitalization,
Graphological
errors,
Paragraphing,
Punctuation,
Syllabification

Introduction

Language plays an important role in the process of education. As an indispensable tool of communication, "it has a strong basis for creative thought and without it there would be no meaningful progress in civilization and culture", Makinde (1997: 7). Language is used to communicate ideas through the process of thinking translated to either speech

or writing. This is why Spencer et al. (1964: 69) opines that language is either transmitted by audible sound waves or visible marks on a surface: language is either phonic or graphic. Therefore, the relationship between language and communication cannot be overemphasized as they are closely intertwined. It is by using language that communication or interaction among human beings becomes operational and

flows uninterruptedly. Language uses signs, symbols and words while communication lays emphasis on message. But without the means of language, message cannot be communicated. That is why language remains the method through which human beings express themselves or communicate. It is a system of conventional spoken manual or written symbols that are well structured for communication and interaction.

Lyons (1981) describes language as the principal system of communication used by groups of human beings within the particular society of which they are members. This idea establishes the fact that the major function of language is communication. Although there are other functions of language such as serving as a means of identity, expression of culture and others, but every function of language revolves around communication. That is why language is purely a peculiarity of human beings and it is a non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires using voluntarily produced symbols (Sapir 1921:8).

Language is symbolic in both written and spoken mediums. And for any language to convey the right meaning, the symbols must follow the right pattern or order as laid down by the conventions of that language. Osisanwo (2003) submits that language is a human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic representation of noise used systematically and conventionally by speech community members for communication purposes. This means that language can be both spoken and written and must be logically arranged and conventionally acceptable before it can be semantically, syntactically and grammatically adjudged to be comprehensible.

The written expressions among secondary school students have become a bane of failure in West African Examination Council (WAEC). Most researchers have focused on analysis/examination of errors of grammar in the written texts by the candidates. For example, Sawalmeh (2013) examined the common errors in essays of 32 male students. It was found that the extracted errors were preponderantly those of verb tense, word order, singular/plural form, subject/verb agreement, double negatives, articles and sentence fragments. Haddadi and Tahririan (2014) also analysed Iranian and Non-Iranian performances in real writing and virtual environments. It was found that verb forms, diction and preposition were the peculiar errors of Iranians and that verb forms, diction and plural 's' are the peculiar error traits of Malaysians in the virtual environments. In a similar research conducted by Zafar (2016), where the common errors were extracted from the writings of business undergraduate students, it was found that verb-tense errors, the interference of the first language, and over-extension of analogy errors were the common ones. Also, in Khan and Khan (2016), investigation was conducted on the paragraph developments of 120 students of Arab (60 males and 60 females). The common errors analysed were those of verb-tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions articles, and auxiliaries, all related to inter-lingual transfers. In a later study, Salehi and Bahrami (2018) did an error analysis of journal papers written by Persian authors. It was found that the dominant errors were those of word usage, articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, tense, active and passive structure, conjunctions and word order. All these researches have shown that there is a

lacuna which this present research aims to consider, and that is to analyse graphological errors in the written essays of students using the selected SS2 students of Mayflower School as a case study.

It should be noted that the overall appearance of the text also matters and contributes greatly to the meaning conveyed in an essay and of course, the overall success of the candidates in the examination. These graphological representations/symbols might not have been given all the attention they require by the language teachers. And this may be responsible for the failure being recorded by the students in essay writing. This paper does not aim to argue for the legibility of handwriting; some students with legible and beautiful handwriting too have been found to present their written expressions in very bad graphological designs, thereby ending up either in communicating wrong messages or distorting information. This means, therefore, that to achieve clarity of meaning in writing, the visual representations or symbols should be of great concern to teachers of English. Through this, the teachers of English will be able to offer some help in putting the students right in their essay writing. This is why this research focuses mainly on the analysis of graphological errors in the sampled essays of penultimate students to WAEC; the SS2 students of Mayflower School, Ikenne.

Literature Review

Two basic concepts offer themselves for elucidation in the review that is made in this section; graphology and error. To start with, the concept, graphology is a blurry meaning. That is to say, the meaning is elusive. That was the submission of Gomez-Jimenez (2015: 73) when she claims that “the very first problem when dealing with graphology is its unclear meaning”.

Accordingly, that confusion is occasioned by “two factors; the non-linguistic meanings attached to this concept and the varied treatment the word has from dictionaries, manuals and works of reference in general” (2015: 72). Nkopuruk (2019) also explains that the confusion with the vague interpretation of the concept may be because of its double meanings, i.e. graphology as it concerns the study of writing systems, and as it also concerns character analysis based on handwriting. The two scholars are actually saying that graphology as a concept can be viewed from two sides; the linguistic point of view and the non-linguistic point of view, although the two perspectives share a common boundary.

Looking at the concept from a non-linguistic perspective, the Encyclopedia Britannica (2011) asserts that the term graphology is an inferential characteristic of an individual's handwriting. It explains further that handwriting is used to express and reveal personality traits. This idea tries to see a connection between the writer of a script and the elements of writing, such as the shape and size of different letters, the extent and uniformity and beautification of curves, strokes and slants, and the general impression the writing creates. Hence, Beit-Hallahmi (1992) confirms that “the attraction of graphology is similar to that of occultic diagnosis. It is simple, cheap, and does not require the physical presence of the subject under diagnosis”. However, the Oxford Advanced English Dictionary (2013) offers the linguistic definition of graphology when it avers that it is the study of written and printed symbols and of writing systems.

The term graphology was first used by McIntosh (1961: 107) in his paper “Graphology and Meaning”. And

he had used the term “in a sense to which is intended to answer in the realm of written language, to that of ‘phonology’ in the realm of spoken language”. This is saying that graphology is to the written language just as phonology is to the spoken language. Halliday *et al.* (1964: 50) agree with that position when they aver that “graphology, however, is an essential part of the description of any written language”. Wales (2001:182) also corroborates this opinion by explaining “that graphology is the writing system of a language, as manifested in handwriting and typography”. She further uses the word graphology as a synonym to graphemics, which is the study of graphemes and any other element related to the written medium or the study of the customary ways in which spoken language is transcribed. That is the appearance of a written matter on a page. Therefore, graphology can be viewed as the study of the system of symbols that have been devised to communicate language in written form. It includes all visual features and designs which a writer deploys to enhance a comprehensive meaning in a written piece. These visual mediums of language in its broadest sense will include “the general resources of language’s written system, including punctuation, spelling, typography, alphabet and paragraph structure, but it can also be extended to incorporate any significant pictorial and iconic devices which supplement this system” Simpson (1997: 25). The essence of graphology cannot be overemphasised in the written composition of students. Van Leeuwen *et al.* (2001) explain that meaning can be created through some graphological features such as lettering, print design and colour. It exerts a psycholinguistic influence on the reading process. That is, how the text is visually arranged helps to manipulate

perceptual strategies, creating mental sketches which inform how information is processed and understood.

Now what is an error? From the linguistic point of view, “an error is the use of a word, speech act or grammatical items in such a way it seems imperfect and significant of an incomplete learning”, Richard *et al.*, (2002: 184). It can be gleaned from the definition that an error is simply an imperfection arising from incomplete learning. Hendrickson (1987: 357) buttresses this idea by mentioning that “errors are ‘signals’ that indicate an actual learning process taking place and that the learner has not yet mastered or shown a well-structured competence in the target language”. Norrish (1983: 7) avers that error is a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. The main difference in this opinion is the fact that errors are systematic and consistent in a learner.

There are different kinds of errors. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) Final Marking Scheme for English Language Paper 1 identifies three types: grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. Accordingly, it states that errors in grammar include all misuse, omission, confusions of all grammatical elements such as noun, verbs, prepositions, pronouns, articles and conjunctions in any structures. Punctuation errors include omission or wrong use of full stop, question mark, exclamation mark, quotations, wrong insertion or omission of commas, using small letters for the pronoun “I”, improper use of uppercase letters and wrong ways of writing abbreviations. Incidentally, suppose a look is taken at all the numbers of errors to be penalised as specified by WAEC, it will be discovered that punctuation,

spelling and capitalization errors, including syllabification errors, which are all graphological in nature, take the lion share.

Apart from stylistic usages which identify a writer's peculiarity and aesthetics in literary works, every language has its convention when it comes to putting marks on a surface/paper. The violation of this writing conventions or rules is called graphological error. Thus a graphological error is an infringement recorded against a writer when he breaks the rule or convention of former writing of a language. Corder (1981) as cited in Al-Tamini (2006: 39) "considers any deviation from what a native speaker would produce as an error". Therefore, all rule-breaking of punctuation, capitalisation, shape and spellings, that are not in agreement with the language rules as set out by the convention of modern English Language, are part of what this paper aims to explore in the sampled essays of the students so as to point their attention to those areas and make them better writers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this research is Corder's (1981) Error Analysis. This is a second language theory that claims learner's errors are crucial to the study of learning and selecting the appropriate tools for teaching. Error Analysis, according to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) is described as a set of procedures to identify, describe and explain learner's errors. The theoretical framework, therefore, provides a good method for studying L2 learner's errors because it plays an important role in investigating, analyzing and categorizing errors committed by a L2 learner (Al-Khresheh, 2016). Ellis (1994: 48) highlights four successive ways of carrying out error analysis.

These include; "collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors and explanation of errors". The main essence of taking all these steps is to provide a feedback to the L2 learners with a view to correcting them. This is supported by Al-Khresheh (2015) when he points out that written accuracy is quite important to L2 learners in various contexts and therefore, learners would always like to get feedback from their teachers on their written errors.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a purposive/judgmental sampling method. The population was made up of all the ten arms of SS two students of Mayflower School, Ikenne, totaling 900. All the 900 students in the ten arms were administered five essay WAEC past questions, out of which they should choose any one. After their responses were collected, purposive sampling was used to select scripts of ten students (5 girls and five boys) from each class. This sampling method was preferred to select the students' essays that share similar graphological error traits from the population. The 100 students selected formed the pilot for the study. The main instrument used was the 2020 May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination paper 1 on different essay writing genres, including formal and informal letter, debate, narrative essay and article writing. The WAEC past question was also used to assess and reflect students' true performance in external examinations to offer useful advice on the preponderant graphological errors discovered in the students' essays. After a thorough reading of the scripts, all errors of graphology in the essays were identified, categorized and corrected and, then explained. Qualitative data analysis was then used in analysing the data. This is to be able to adequately

describe the students' graphological errors and offer detailed and necessary suggestions on how to overcome the errors.

Analysis

The analysis conducted in this paper follows laid down patterns set out by the theoretical framework adopted. The patterns involve identification, categorization, correction and explanation of the errors. The explanation offered also involved suggesting basis for the error and justification for the correction. The categories of graphological errors that were preponderantly noticed in the students' essays are punctuation, syllabification, spelling, capitalisation, and paragraphing. Each of these items is discussed one after the other with copious examples from the sampled scripts.

Punctuation Errors

Punctuation errors are committed when a writer ignores the rules of spacing, insertion of points or marks that show division or difference between sentences, clauses and phrases in a sentence. There are not less than fourteen punctuation marks which are commonly used in English; these are; the full stop, question mark, exclamation mark, comma, semicolon, colon, dash, hyphen, bracket, square, braces, apostrophe, quotation marks and ellipsis. The errors found with the students in their write-ups are categorised into three; omission of punctuation, wrong use/insertion of punctuation and confusion of punctuation. The table below illustrates and elucidates each of the punctuation error

Table 1 shows the omission of punctuation

Omission of punctuation	Correct usage
17th March 2022	17th March, 2022/March 17, 2022
First of all let me ask for my brother	First of all, let me ask for my brother.
If the following steps are taken there would be improvement	If the following steps are taken, there would be improvement

The examples above display an omission of the comma in each expression. The students did not know that when writing the date in the address, the month/date is usually separated from the year by a comma. In addition, adverbial phrase or clause introducing a sentence will have to be

marked off from the main clause by a comma. That explains the situation in examples two and three in the table. What this implies is that the students have not mastered well enough the uses of the comma (,) and this failure account for the errors being committed in those examples.

Table 2 shows the wrong insertion of punctuation marks

Wrong insertion of punctuation marks	Correct usage
17th, March, 2022.	17th March, 2022.
We are, doing fine here.	We are doing fine here.
My parent told me. Not to go there.	My parents told me not to go there

The table above shows instances of wrong insertion of one punctuation or the other in the sampled writings of the students. In the earlier example, the first comma between '17th' and 'March' is wrongly inserted. It renders the reading of what should be a date a listing of items such as 17th, March, and 2022. This is a clear distortion of information and intention. In the second example, the comma between 'are' and 'doing' is intrusive in the structure. The student failed to understand that there is usually no separation by way of a comma between the subject and its verb if there is no intervening element. The

Table 3 shows the confusion of punctuation marks

Confusion of punctuation	Correct usage
How are you.	How are you?
Hope everything is going on well?	Hope everything is going on well.
When I got there. I saw what they are doing.	When I got there, I saw what they were doing.

The above examples of graphological errors excerpted from the students' scripts show an interchange of punctuation marks. Thus, where a question mark is supposed to be used, the students have used a full stop and vice versa, as in the case of the first and second sentences. And where a comma would have been appropriate, the students have opted for the use of a full stop as in the case of the third example. The confusion in the first and second instances may be as a result of the fact that the students could not differentiate between the rising and the falling tunes of a question and a statement, respectively. This is because, in most cases, there is a relationship between the phonic and iconic representations. There is no doubt that the expression 'How are you?' is a question which

third example is also a case of wrong insertion of the period (full stop). The structure is an example of a verb and its two complements. The student has ignorantly inserted a full stop between two objects, 'me' and 'not to go' which should have been written together. The problem with the wrong usages in example 2 and 3 gives an idea that the writers need to learn more on the uses of both the comma and the full stop. If not, they may continue to write as though they intend to suggest a trait of stammering defect in their speech, which has come to bear in their writings.

normally ends with a rising tune and must be so represented in the written form. The only way to show an elicitation in writing is by ending the statement with a question mark. Such a sentence is an elicitation that requires a response from the receiver/interlocutor. To tackle this problem once and for all, those sentences which are interrogative in nature must be consciously taught the students, such as polar and non-polar questions. It will be important for them to learn how questions are framed/constructed with 'wh' words like 'what', 'which', 'when', 'where', 'whose', 'whom', and 'how'. Questions with modal constructions should also be taught the students, such as 'can we ...?', 'will they ...?', 'does it...?' and 'have I...?'. In the same vein, statements which are said with the rising tune of question must be clarified for the students, example; 'you are not coming with us?'. And until they learn those things, the confusion may remain with the students.

Furthermore, 'Hope everything is going on well' is not a question. Therefore, rather than such an expression to end with a question mark, it will end with a full stop. The writer only wishes to express a hope just like a

wish and does not intend to ask a question. The last example, ‘when I got there. I saw what they are doing’, is a case of hanging and disjointed expressions simply because of a full stop that has been made to intervene between two clauses where the first is a subordinate and the second is a main clause. Whereas a comma would have been appropriate in the place where a full stop has been used. This confused state of the learner needs an intervention in the area of using the comma to mark off a dependent clause from an independent clause.

Syllabification Error

Syllabification is separating a word into syllables in spoken, written or signed (Baus, C. *et al.* 2014). To indicate the syllable in writing, it is usually marked by a hyphen, especially in the English orthography. Syllabification usually comes in at the end of the line when the little space that remains is unable to accommodate the entire word to be written. What is done is that the word is broken into syllables in such a way that a part of the word marked by a hyphen remains in the little space, while the rest of the word is continued on the next line. However, some students do not do this correctly. Some instances of wrong syllabifications are shown below.

Table 4 shows wrong syllabifications

Wrong syllabification	Correction
The prefects... the plots have not been perfo-rming .	The prefects... the plots have not been performing .
... My dear brother, you need to ... your mi-nd about your decision	... My dear brother, you need to ... your mind
I regretted that day, I had never felt so em-barrassed in my life	I regretted that day, I had never felt so em-barrassed in my life

The above examples are instances of wrong syllabification from the students' sampled essays, which clearly demonstrate that some do not grasp the concept well. Taking a look at the first example, the word ‘performing’ was not divided at the correct syllabic boundary. The syllables in the word follow this pattern; ‘per-forming’. So, it is either the student cuts the word after the first syllable ‘per-forming’ or after the second syllable ‘perfor-ming’ but not as it was written ‘perfo-rming’ which has no definite and clear pattern. In the second example, many students are ignorant that a word having only one syllable, such as ‘mind’, cannot be

separated. It is either the word is squeezed in the little space before the end of the line if possible, or the entire word is shifted to the next line. Breaking the word into two as ‘mi-nd’ will render the expression meaningless. The third example is an error of hyphenation in the process of syllabification. The hyphen by convention is usually written immediately after the syllable that occupies the little space in the first line not the second line where the rest of the syllables are written. The hyphen itself is a redirection sign, pointing to the next line for the complete expression/word. By not accompany

the earlier syllables with hyphen (i.e. em-), and attaching it to the one on the next line (i.e. -barrassed), it gives an impression that the first syllable is a complete word 'em' while the one on the next line '-barrassed' stands loose and gibberish.

Error of Capitalisation

Capitalisation refers to the choice of the casing applied in text or writing. It means that while some letters of words are capital letters, others should be written in small letters, although the rules are complicated and must be deliberately learnt by students. There is a capital

letter or uppercase letter and there is a small letter or lowercase letter in conventional English language systems. For instance, the first letter of the word that introduces a sentence must be written with uppercase while other words in the same sentence must appear in lowercase. But the first letter of proper nouns or 'I' pronoun must always be written in capital letters regardless of where they appear in a sentence. There are other rules which every learner must master. This section analyses some of the errors of capitalisation that students often make as reflected in their sampled essays.

Table 5 shows errors of capitalisation

Error of Capitalisation	Correction
Dear bidemi ,	Dear Bidemi ,
That saturday we went on a journey to Abeokuta	That Saturday , we went on a journey to Abeokuta
On the 3rd of august 2017.	On the 3rd of August 2017.
It was a day i cannot forget.	It was a day I cannot forget
I bought Groundnut, Onion, Rice, Beans ,	I bought groundnut, onion, rice, beans , ...
... finally the Day came to an End finally the day came to an end .
firstly , students come late to school...	Firstly students come late to school...

The above examples will suffice to capture some of the various capitalisation errors prominent in the students' sampled essays. In all, the students generally displayed a situation of non-distinction between the proper nouns and common nouns. The words 'Bidemi', 'Saturday', 'Abeokuta' and 'August' are proper nouns that must begin with capital letters because they represent name of specific person, day of the week, town/city, and month respectively. Others in the category of proper nouns are; names of God, countries, continents, oceans, institutions, companies, airlines and others. In addition, as pointed out

earlier, 'I' pronoun will always take the uppercase regardless of where it appears in a sentence. But the students did not know this. The next two examples are instances of indiscriminate use of the capital letters. The students have chosen to capitalise the beginning of every noun word in the sentence despite the fact that the words are common nouns. Thus, words like 'groundnut', 'onion', 'rice', 'beans', 'day' and 'end' should have appeared in lowercases. Finally, the last example is one of the most pathetic instances of the rule breaking in capitalisation among the students, where a sentence which ought to begin with a

capital letter was actually begun with a lowercase. This means that the students still have a lot to learn on the rules of capitalisation. For a sentence opening a paragraph or after a full stop, exclamation mark or interjection, the rule is that it must begin with a capital letter.

Errors of spellings

There are also acceptable spellings for every word in any language, English not being an

exception. When the rule of correct spelling is broken, then there is an infringement on the part of the writer which can be penalised by the examiner, and which can even distort meaning in writing. That is why every learner must master the spelling of words that are being used. The following excerpted wrong spellings are presented in the table below for analysis:

Table 6 shows cases of wrong spellings

Wrong spellings	Correction
I am very happy to be written this letter to you	I am very happy to be writing this letter to you.
... bcs it has been a while I heard from you.	... because it has been a while I heard from you.
Infact , we were very happy...	In fact , we were very happy...
More over , I can't stand it anylonger .	Moreover , I can't stand it any longer .
I am writing in other to let you know that...	I am writing in order to let you know that...
He was my male in the primary school	He was my mate in the primary school

There is a catalogue of spelling errors in the essays of the sampled students. The first error in the table is sampled to represent several other errors of spelling arising from non-distinction between sound alike words otherwise known as homophones. The word 'writing' was confused with 'written'. Instead of using the 'ing' form of verb 'writing', the participial form 'written' has been used, which created a structural deformity in the sentence. In the second example, 'because' was shortened/contracted to 'bcs', a clear case of exposure to internet language taking its negative tolls on the students' writing ability. Although certain words may be abbreviated or shortened in colloquial usages, no such short-hands may be allowed even in informal writings. Some accepted abbreviations

that are allowed are 'can't', 'it's' and 'I'll' especially with the use of apostrophe. In the next two examples, there is a forced amalgamation/marriage of words which should be separated.

The word written as 'infact' should be written as 'in fact' because there are actually two words there. But in the subsequent example, there is an instance of forceful separation of a word that should be written as one. The word 'moreover' was written as two separate words 'more over'. The word 'anylonger' which should be written as two words 'any longer' was taken as one word. The same explanation about the confusion with some homophones goes for the words 'other' and 'order'. Instead of writing 'in order', the students had written 'in other'. The last example of spelling error is a clear case

of sheer carelessness on the part of the students for refusing to cross their 't's' as it is usually said. Instead of writing 'mate' the student succeeded in writing 'male'. And this is one of the most interesting aspects of the negative effect that bad spellings can have on understanding the message being passed across when writing.

Errors of paragraphing

A paragraph is a distinct section of a piece of writing which discusses a single theme and is indicated by a new line or indentation. An indentation is a blank space of not more than five spaces or one-half of an inch between a margin and the beginning of a line of text. Paragraphs give good shape to a composition. It helps to separate the ideas in the entire essay and makes the composition stand in well-organised structures. However, when rules of good paragraphing are not followed in writing, the points being raised become distorted or disjointed. Two main errors were noticed at this level. One was a case of irregular paragraphing, where a sentence paragraphing was written. And the other is a case of no paragraph at all, where ideas were lumped together for a whole page and there was no clear demarcation of ideas. The problem with the students was that they did not learn how to develop their points in paragraphs very well. The teacher may have to start teaching them paragraph development by first teaching them how to make an outline for their essays. It is this outline that the students will now develop into paragraphs which will combine together to make the whole essay.

Recommendations

It is not enough to identify and analyse the various graphological errors students commit in their essays without making useful recommendations that can assist them to improve the quality of their

compositions. First, teachers who handle essay writing lessons have a role to play by deliberately teaching the students the rules guiding the use of basic punctuation marks, such as full stop (.), comma (,), question mark (?), and capitalisation which are usually wrongly inserted, confused or mis-used. The students must learn that while the full stop is used as a sentence marker, the comma is normally applied as a light break/pause within a sentence. Question mark is also used to indicate an interrogative construction of either polar or non-polar, and a capital letter will usually begin a sentence/paragraph or used for any proper noun in an expression. Furthermore, it may be important for the teacher to compile a list of all homophones and other related words which are commonly mis-spelt for the students to learn consciously. There is also the need for English language teachers to focus on teaching word syllables and their structures. This will help the students to learn about syllabic boundaries, thus making it easier for them to correctly divide any word into syllables. Lastly, it is recommended that the students should be taught paragraphing through a step-by-step development of outlines. This will go a long way to tackle the problem of irregular paragraphing and one-line/sentence paragraph which are common error traits of the students.

Conclusion

This study has carried out an analysis of graphological errors in the essays of selected SS2 students of Mayflower School, Ikenne. Using judgmental sampling research methodology through the instrument of a past WAEC question, the Corder's Error Analysis framework was used to analyse the data qualitatively. After the errors were identified, they were categorized, explained and corrected. It was discovered that there were clear

manifestations of unpardonable graphological errors of punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, syllabification and paragraphing in the selected students' essays. Punctuation marks were either omitted or wrongly inserted in structures, while capital letters were indiscriminately used. Homophones and related words were also misrepresented. At the same time, words that could not contain little spaces at the end of the line were wrongly broken into syllables, thereby distorting the intended meaning. These errors did mar not only the students' composition but also had the potential to affect the performance of the students negatively. However, it is hoped that if the recommendations suggested at the end of the research are adequately followed, the various errors so identified will drastically reduce in students' subsequent essays.

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