



Lexicalization and Complexity in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peacekeeping Agreements

Prof. Nwogu N. Kevin

Department of Language, Linguistics and Literary Studies
Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo
Enugu State, Nigeria
Profnwogu@yahoo.com

Dr. Vivien Bello-Osagie

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

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v1i3.101>

Received:

03/11/2019

Accepted:

27/12/2019

Keywords:

ECOWAS;
Peacekeeping
Agreements;
Lexical Density;
Redundancy;
Hedging

Abstract

The paper seeks to establish the level of lexical complexity in the discourse of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping agreements (EPKA) and to describe the lexical strategies through which the observed complexity is created. Many studies on linguistic complexity focus on second language acquisition, assessment and writing development. But, this article focuses on lexical choices that create complexity capable of hindering reader's comprehension. It utilizes quantitative and qualitative designs in its analysis of corpus which consists of ten purposively selected EPKA texts. The data are analysed using Web-based Lexical Complexity Analyzer. The findings indicate that the language of the EPKA is complex. The complexity is attributed to high lexical density, lengthy words and long sentences in the corpus. Also, a large proportion of words in the corpus are redundant and vague. It is hoped that this article provides information about the lexical choices needed to improve the discourse of peacekeeping agreements.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Communication through language plays a vital role in the conduct of human and organizational interactions or relationships. Communication, if not well-managed, can generate conflict situations. One of these fundamental issues, especially in Africa, is that of conflict and peacekeeping. It is important for language scholars to become interested in the ways conflicts and peacekeeping initiatives are expressed, reproduced or legitimated through text and talk. The aim of this study is to investigate the level of lexical complexity in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peacekeeping Agreement (EPKA) discourse and to uncover the linguistic choices of the authors that account for the complex use of language in the discourse.

2. COMPLEXITY AND LEXICAL COMPLEXITY

The concept of complexity is a difficult component of the discourse analysis framework to define and operationalize hence Bulte and Housen (2012) claim that the contradictory results gotten in selected complexity studies are partly explained by the vagueness of metalinguistic definitions, which relate to a varied number of different aspects that are measured. However, Bulte and Housen (2012) gives a definition of complexity that this study finds satisfying. According to them, complexity can refer to “(i) the number and the nature of the discrete components that the entity consists of, and (ii) the number and the nature of the relationships between the constituent components” (p. 22).

According to Housen, Kuiken & Vedder (2012), complexity, is seen today as the qualitative dimension of language use. A proficient language user produces fluently accurate and complex language. This dimension of language use has interested many researchers and has been studied in both spoken and written discourse. With the help of this concept, researchers have been able to describe and study the proficiency of the L2 learner (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). In the same light, linguistic complexity measures have, for instance, been used to evaluate L2 writing development (Ortega, 2003). So far, in the majority of discourse analysis, the focus has been on accuracy, fluency or the developmental aspect of complexity, whereas the present study focuses on linguistic complexity in a written discourse.

Many complexity measures have been proposed, and that of Nichols (1986) is one of such studies. In her work, she counts the number of points in “a typical sentence” that are capable of receiving inflection. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) categorise types of complexity measures according to the object of measurement into interactional, propositional, functional, grammatical and lexical. The present study is on lexical complexity. Several researches on lexical complexity have been carried out such as Hinkel (2003, 2005, and 2011) and Sylva (1993). These researchers focused on lexical complexity of L2 writers’ academic texts by comparing them with the native writer’s text. In their study, Afini and Cahyono (2012) found that both male and female students used the 2,000 most frequent words repetitively. In other words, the students’ lexical sophistication was considered low since 79.12 % of the word families used were included as high frequency words.

Unlike the studies mentioned above, the corpus of the present study is made up of ECOWAS peacekeeping agreement texts. The purpose of this article is twofold: firstly, it segments the nature of linguistic complexity in the ECOWAS Peacekeeping Agreement Texts, and then, it explores the effects of the segmented lexical unit on the language EPKA texts. The data come from peacekeeping agreements that ECOWAS partook in during a 10 year period of unrest in its Member States

Various studies on syntactic complexity have examined the ways of measuring syntactic complexity. As Hunt (1965) states, more is often considered to be a sign of complexity. Thus, length, amount of embedding, and frequency of certain sophisticated structures (e.g., non-finite clauses) can function as a basis for syntactic complexity. It follows that long production units (e.g., elongated sentences) can be considered more complex than short units. The number of subordinated structures is one of the most frequently used measures in syntactic complexity studies, especially in L2 studies (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005). Diessel (2004) notes that complex sentences originate from simple sentences that are gradually linked together, through coordination and subordination. This linking of production units makes the language more complex. Some linguistic elements are also considered more complex than others (e.g. infinitival phrases) (Bulte & Housen 2012). Higher frequency of such elements can be seen as a sign of complex language use.

3. PEACEKEEPING AND ECOWAS PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Peacekeeping is still an evolving concept (Uesugi, 2004). The term peacekeeping did not come into general usage until after the Suez Crisis in the late 1950's (Uesugi, 2004). Boutros Ghali, the former UN General-Secretary, wrote a report stating a new approach for the UN to achieve its ultimate goal of achieving peace (Uesugi, 2004). It was published in 1992. The report, *An Agenda for Peace_ Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, was an unprecedented document in that peacekeeping is mentioned as a tool to reach just and long-term political solutions (Boutros, 1992).

While peacekeeping is the most widely term used, it is just one tool used in trying to cope with a conflict at hand. It is a concept problematic to define as it is not mentioned in the UN Charter. There are as many peacekeeping operations as there are types of conflict (Uesugi, 2004). In addition, peacekeeping is often adjusted to fit each circumstance. However, peacekeeping shows certain characteristics separating it from other UN approaches. According to Uesugi (2004) peacekeeping is the use of a multinational force, usually including military and/or civilian personnel in a field of conflict. It also operates under consent; the host country must provide permission for the peacekeeping force to operate on its territory. Sovereignty of states is thus recognized by the peacekeeping operations and as soon as the permission is withdrawn the force must leave.

According to Ruggie (1995), peacekeeping has also typically involved lightly armed military personnel. Use of force is used only in self-defence. In effect, peacekeeping is sometimes termed as a "Chapter VI ½ peace operation," residing somewhere between the peaceful resolution of conflicts (chapter 6 of the UN Charter) and enforcement (chapter 7) (Ruggie, 1995, p. 67). Neutrality and impartiality are crucial for a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeeping is often linked to peacemaking in that peacekeeping is concerned with stopping or containing conflict so peacemaking can take place (Maley, 1995). The tasks of the peacekeeping force include but are not limited to implementing and monitoring peace agreements or ceasefires, separation of forces and to protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance (Uesugi, 2004).

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, 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.

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. 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). The data for analysis in this study is sourced from peacekeeping agreements that ECOWAS was a part of as its responsibility for the task of maintaining peace in its conflicted regions.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is a corpus based description and evaluation of the use of language in peacekeeping agreement documents. 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 linguistic 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 ten texts have been tagged T1 to T10 for easy of referencing in the analysis.

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)	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

As shown in Table 1, the data collected span a period of 10 years (1993 to 2003). ECOWAS was established in 1975 and as stated in the review, 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 and therefore empowering 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.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study examines lexical density, word length, sentence length and readability index of the corpus in order to reveal the simplicity or otherwise of the language used in the EPKA texts. Also, attention is paid to the lexical strategies used in the texts. According to Van Dijk (2009) model for analysing discourse, lexicalization is a term used to describe the strategic choice of words to emphasize meaning in discourse. In the context of this study, attention is paid to the strategic use of lexical items in the EPKA texts that results to hedging (or

vagueness) and redundancy in the corpus.

Table 2 and Figure 1 below display the frequency and the percentage distribution of the word classes employed in the EPKA:

Table 2. Distribution of Lexical Items in EPKA Texts

Tag	No. of Words	Nouns		Adjectives		Verbs		Adverbs		Preposition		Pronouns		Auxiliary Verbs		Others	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
T1	1,068	364	4.1	65	3.3	104	3.5	20	4.0	186	4.6	6	3.4	13	2.1	310	4.2
T2	1,060	302	3.4	62	3.1	164	5.5	31	6.2	155	3.8	16	9.1	31	5.1	299	4.0
T3	6,805	2,257	25.5	564	29.0	771	25.8	122	24.3	993	24.6	34	19.4	156	25.5	1908	25.8
T4	6,039	2,028	23.0	392	20.1	610	20.4	114	22.7	1014	25.1	36	20.6	157	25.7	1688	22.8
T5	5,810	2,004	22.6	493	25.3	666	22.3	92	18.3	871	21.6	34	19.4	100	16.4	1550	21.0
T6	234	76	0.85	15	0.8	18	0.6	3	0.6	43	1.1	1	0.6	2	0.3	76	1.0
T7	228	78	0.88	15	0.8	17	0.5	8	1.6	37	0.9	0	0	4	0.7	69	0.9
T8	930	334	3.77	54	2.8	87	3.0	15	3.0	132	3.3	12	6.9	42	6.9	254	3.4
T9	671	292	3.3	47	2.4	40	1.3	9	1.7	94	2.3	4	2.3	15	2.4	170	2.3
T10	3,664	1,119	12.6	241	12.4	514	17.1	88	17.5	513	12.7	32	18.3	91	14.9	1066	14.4
Total	26,509	8,854	33.4	1948	7.3	2991	11.3	502	1.9	4,038	15.2	175	0.7	611	2.3	7,390	27.9

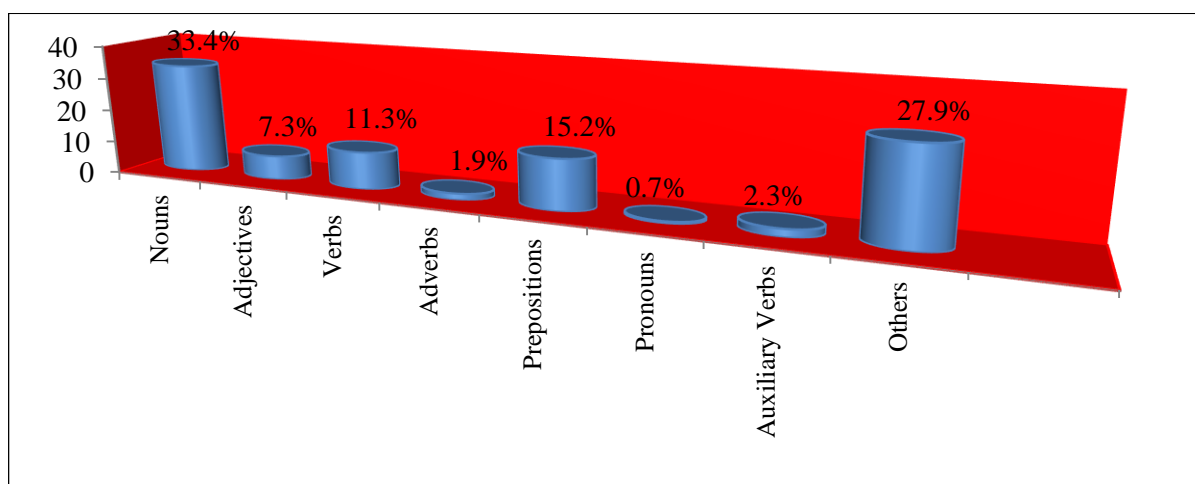


Figure 1. Chart Showing the Percentage Distribution of Lexical Items in EPKA Texts

Table 3. Lexical Density and Readability in EPKA Texts

Tag	No. of Words	Word Length		No of Sentences	Average Sentence Length		Lexical Density		Readability Index (Gunning Fog Index)
		Median	Average		Median	Average	Total LW	Density	
T1	1068	4	5.3	21	11	18.89	553	51.77	18.82
T2	1060	4	5.12	11	25	35.7	559	52.73	23.19
T3	6805	5	5.44	201	14	18.53	3714	54.57	18.24
T4	6039	5	5.19	164	21	25.34	3144	52.06	20.01
T5	5810	5	5.36	132	23.5	28.45	3255	56.02	21.28
T6	234	4	5.3	4	22	77.67	112	47.86	46.65
T7	228	5	5.3	8	15	17.46	118	51.75	16.84
T8	930	5	5.49	38	15	16.5	490	52.68	17.6
T9	671	5	5.35	18	9	1354	388	57.82	18.11
T10	3664	5	5.3	106	19	22.5	1962	53.54	19.44

Total	26,509	5	5.33	702	18	22.49	14,295	53.92	22.18
	LW stands for Lexical Words								

In order to ascertain the level of lexical complexity in the EPKA texts, focus is paid on the frequency of distribution of lexical variety across the ten selected EPKA texts. The lexical variety count in Table 2 shows the frequency of occurrence and the percentage distribution of content and functional words used in the texts notably nouns (33.4%), adjectives (7.3%), verbs (11.3%), adverbs (1.9%), prepositions (15.2%), pronouns (0.7%), auxiliary verbs (2.3%) and other functional and connecting words (27.9%) found in the corpus. Table 3 on the other hand, displays the average and median length of words and sentences used in the corpus. It also shows the lexical density and the readability index of the EPKA texts using the Gunning Fog Readability Index Scale.

5.1. Lexical Complexity

From the information displayed in Tables 2 and 3 above, it is clear that the language used in EPKA texts is indeed complex. The average word length in the corpus is 5.33 with a median of 5. Further examination of the length of words in the EPKA text showed several instances of lengthy words that contained more than 12 alphabets. Examples from the corpus are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of Lengthy Words in the EPKA Texts

Tag	Words	Length	Frequency in EPKA Texts
T1	<i>Representatives</i>	15	23
	<i>Reconciliation</i>	14	30
	<i>Deteriorating</i>	13	1
T2	<i>Unconditionally</i>	15	2
	<i>Manipulations</i>	13	1
	<i>Reaffirmation</i>	13	3
T3	<i>Rehabilitation</i>	14	29
	<i>Disengagement</i>	13	13
	<i>Reintegration</i>	13	27
T4	<i>Representative</i>	14	57
	<i>Participating</i>	13	13
	<i>Collaboration</i>	13	10
T5	<i>Implementation</i>	14	65
	<i>Demobilization</i>	14	31
	<i>Restructuring</i>	13	9
T6	<i>Self-denominated</i>	15	3
	<i>Strengthening</i>	13	1
	<i>Interposition</i>	13	9
T7	<i>Self-proclaimed</i>	14	6
	<i>Simultaneously</i>	14	1
	<i>International</i>	13	96
T8	<i>Infrastructures</i>	15	1
	<i>Reconstruction</i>	14	22
	<i>Revolutionary</i>	13	3
T9	<i>Telecommunication</i>	17	1
	<i>Incapacitation</i>	14	1
	<i>Parliamentary</i>	13	2
T10	<i>Intergovernmental</i>	17	1
	<i>Considerations</i>	14	1
	<i>Organizations</i>	13	14

Aside from word length, the length of the sentences also contributes to the complexity of EPKA texts, as shown in Table 4. The average sentence length is 22.49, with a median value

of 18. Despite the deployment of some graphological devices (such as colon, semi-colon, comma and enumeration) to break lengthy sentences into manageable and readable sizes, the analysis however, reveals the presence of some lengthy sentences containing more than 50 words. This can be seen in the extracts below.

Example 1: *The Parties call on ECOWAS to immediately establish a Multinational Force that will be deployed as an Interposition Force in Liberia, to secure the ceasefire, create a zone of separation between the belligerent forces and thus provide a safe corridor for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and free movement of persons. (T3)*

Example 2: *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)*

Example 3: *Guided by the Declaration in the Final Communiqué of the Meeting in Lorne of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ECOWAS of 25 May 1999^{SC}, in which they stressed the importance of democracy as a factor of regional peace and security^{SC} and as essential to the socio-economic development of ECOWAS Member States^{SC} and in which they pledged their commitment to the consolidation of democracy and respect of human rights^{SC} while reaffirming the need for all Member States to consolidate their democratic base^{SC} observe the principles of good governance and good economic management in order to ensure the emergence and development of a democratic culture^{SC} which takes into account the interests of the peoples of West Africa (T5)*

Example 1 contains 52 words; example 2 has 65 and example 3 has 116 words. From the above extracts, it is obvious that at the level of the lexemes, the EPKA is complex. This complexity accounts for the corpus having a lexical density of 53.92%. The reason for this lies in the condensed nature of the information package via the lexical items as well as the use of lengthy sentence structures in the EPKA texts. The complexity of long sentences in the corpus is often enhanced by yet another grammatical trait, namely; the use of several embedding of different syntactical nature. In example 3 above, the extract contains 5 embedded clauses and 18 prepositional phrases. Such complex words and structures can hinder immediate comprehension of the text. On the other hand, the long complex sentences of EPKA English, in contrast to the short ones of informal conversation, are capable of standing alone and will not lose their meaning even if taken out of context. But such long sentences enable the EPKA drafters to achieve the most possible accuracy and precision and diminish the role of context.

Lexical density is the term most often used for describing the proportion of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and often also adverbs) to the total number of words. In computational linguistics, lexical density constitutes the estimated measure of content words per functional (grammatical) words and lexical units (lexemes). Halliday (1989) defines lexical density as ‘... measures of the density of information in any passage of text, according to how tightly the lexical items (content words) have been packed into the grammatical structure. It can be measured, in English, as the number of lexical words per clause. According to Carter (1987), items that do not have lexical properties can be described purely

in terms of grammar, meaning that such words (or items) possess a more grammatical-syntactic function than the lexical items. Following Carter (1987) basic method of calculating lexical density in a text, all the words in the data were calculated and a single word in the EPKA texts was treated as an orthographic word. Afterwards, all the content words were calculated in spite of their repeated occurrences in the text. The total number of orthographic words and the total number of lexical words were arranged in relation to each other to establish the texts' lexical density as shown below.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Lexical Density} &= L/T \times 100\% \\ \text{Where:} \quad L &= \text{lexical/content words of a text} \\ &T = \text{total number of the words of a text} \\ &14,295 \\ 100 - &\quad \times \quad - &= &53.92\% \\ 26,509 &\quad \quad \quad 1 \end{aligned}$$

Through the investigation of the lexical density of the corpus, the analysis revealed that EPKA texts have a high level of information packaged within its lexical structures. A text with a high proportion of content words contains more information than a text with a high proportion of function words (prepositions, interjections, pronouns, conjunctions and count words) (Carter, 1987). The result of the lexical density of EPKA texts (at 53.92%) further revealed that the noun group dominates typical EPKA texts, since they pack information within their possibly extended structure of nominalization, pre-modification- head- post-modification thereby making the EPKA texts having very informative noun group structure. Apart from the clause, the nominal group is "the grammatical unit" which allows the widest range of meaning to be expressed (Halliday, 1994). Hence, the noun groups are featured predominately in the EPKA texts for high level information packaging.

The analysis of the lexical structure of the corpus, therefore, suggests that EPKA texts use more nominal groups in packaging information. The study further reveals two factors that are responsible for the high occurrence of nominal groups in the data: the overuse of nominalizations and prepositional phrases. These factors ultimately resulted in the EPKA texts having a lexical density of 53.92%. According to this formula, if the amount of lexical density surpasses 50%, it indicates a high lexical density and this high density accounted for the Gunning Fog readability index of the data at 22.18 as shown in Table 3. According to the Gunning Fog Readability Index, the higher the density the more complicated and complex the text is; it means then that the EPKA texts (at least the ones used in this study) are complicated, complex and hard to read. And this complexity has the potential of hindering comprehension of some of the negotiators.

5.2.Redundancy

A survey of the lexical structure of EPKA texts shows that a large proportion of the words used in the texts are redundant. In linguistics, redundancy refers to the use of more words than are necessary to express a thought (Dawson, 1992). Often, redundancies occur in speech unintentionally, but redundant words can also be deliberately constructed for emphasis, to reduce the chance that a phrase will be misinterpreted. Redundancy typically takes the form of tautology: phrases that repeat a meaning with different though semantically similar words. Examples from the corpus are shown below to portray the presence of redundancy in EPKA documents:

Example 4: *Humanitarian. The Parties shall provide security guarantees for safe and **unhindered access** by humanitarian agencies to vulnerable groups, **free movement** of persons and goods, as well as for the return and resettlement of*

refugees and internally displaced persons. (T1)

Example 5: Ceasefire Violations. *Violations of a ceasefire shall include the following:*

- a. *All attacks by any of the parties against the locations of the other parties, as well as acts of sabotage, laying of mines, hostage taking and seizure of materials belonging to one of the parties;*
- b. *Harassment, attacks, hostage taking, and arrest of combatants as well as seizure of arms and equipment belonging to another party;*
- c. *Harassment, attacks, hostage taking, or unlawful arrest of civilians and personnel of humanitarian agencies as well as seizure of properties of individuals and corporations;* (T1)

Example 6: *Reaffirm that the national programme of demobilization, disarmament and reinsertion will continue* (T2)

In example 4 above, the phrase “security guarantee” shows a redundancy in the use of lexical items. The lexeme ‘guarantee’ in the sentence is superfluous, hence redundant. What needs to be provided for the citizens to be ‘safe’ is ‘security’ and not the ‘guarantee’ of security. In example 5, the words: *attacks, harassment, hostage taking* are over-used. Also, in that same clause, the phrase ‘*unhindered access*’ is repeated again in the form of *free movement*. In example 6, *demobilization* and *disarmament* are synonymous. So, using both in the same clause resulted to redundancy.

The redundancy observed above can be deemed necessary to achieve textual cohesion, or to express pleonastic constructions; hence, it remains a linguistically valid tool used by the drafters of EPKA texts to place emphasis on some expressed idea. Though the use of repetition of the words underlined above, redundancy increases the odds of predictability of the messages’ meaning and understanding to the peace negotiators and other readers. However, it should be noted that the over-use of these words that could have been avoided makes the EPKA texts superfluous and thus, increases the tendency of incomprehension on the part of the reader. Avoiding or getting rid of such redundant words will go a long way in reducing the verbosity in EPKA texts.

5.3. Lexical Hedging

In addition to the use of redundant lexical items, EPKA drafters often employ the use of words that create vague meaning in the corpus. The use of hedges in scientific discourse has been studied to some extent in relatively recent work. But, as Hyland (1998) states, the study of hedging in different contexts has only just begun. Burns (1991, p. 192) referred to hedging as “vagueness of the ordinary kind, which results from deliberate violations of the standards set by natural classification ranges”. Two main reasons why one might wish to resort to ‘violations of the standards’ of the categories of natural language can be put forth. First, hedges are sometimes needed in utterances to mark the information presented as uncertain, vague, or imprecise, that is, to indicate that one’s knowledge of the world or the evidence available does not allow one to assign the phenomena under observation to the relevant conceptual categories or to put forth a straightforward proposition (Burns, 1991). Second, hedging may be seen to take place when the limited set of natural language concepts is not deemed sufficiently precise to give the right representation of reality (Burns, 1991).

Vagueness in the use of certain lexical items in the EPKA texts is examined in this aspect of the analysis. The aim here is to identify the lexical features of hedging in the data as well as highlight the significant role of hedging in the EPKA texts. Table 5 displays some of

the lexical items in the corpus that are markers of vagueness in the data.

Table 5. Lexical Markers of hedging in EPKA Texts

Verbs		Modal Aux.		Adjectives		Adverbs		Prepositional Phrase	
Word	FQ	Word	FQ	Word	FQ	Word	FQ	Phrase	FQ
<i>recommend</i>	5	<i>may</i>	34	<i>appropriate</i>	36	<i>concurrently</i>	2	<i>in their power</i>	1
<i>invite</i>	1	<i>might</i>	1	<i>adequate</i>	2	<i>unreservedly</i>	1	<i>within range</i>	1
<i>urge</i>	1	<i>could</i>	1	<i>comprehensive</i>	2	<i>properly</i>	1	<i>within its capabilities</i>	1
<i>exhort</i>	14	<i>must</i>	9	<i>immediate</i>	15	<i>adequately</i>	2	<i>divisible</i>	1
<i>call</i>	14	<i>should</i>	22	<i>reasonable</i>	1	<i>whenever</i>	1		
<i>assume</i>	1			<i>proper</i>	15	<i>accordingly</i>	13		
<i>deems</i>	3			<i>innumerable</i>	2	<i>most</i>	3		
<i>expect</i>	3			<i>sound</i>	2	<i>currently</i>	2		
<i>deemed</i>	7			<i>sufficient</i>	1				
<i>observe</i>	3			<i>possible</i>	7				
<i>considering</i>	12			<i>current</i>	5				
<i>request</i>	16			<i>usual</i>	1				
				<i>desirous</i>	4				

As can be seen in Table 5, the adjective contributes the highest number of lexical markers for hedges and vagueness in the EPKA texts. The above markers are further classified based on their attributes in the EPKA texts in Table 6.

Table 6: Linguistic Markers of Hedging and their Attributes in the EPKA Texts

Probability	Indetermination	Approximation	Subjectivization
<i>could</i>	<i>in their power</i>	<i>immediate</i>	<i>Recommend(ed)</i>
<i>may</i>	<i>to shoulder their responsibilities</i>	<i>innumerable</i>	<i>desirous</i>
<i>might</i>	<i>within range</i>	<i>immediately</i>	<i>invite</i>
<i>possible</i>	<i>within its capabilities</i>	<i>current</i>	<i>urge</i>
<i>must</i>	<i>current logic of peace</i>	<i>currently</i>	<i>exhort</i>
<i>should</i>	<i>elsewhere</i>	<i>sufficient</i>	<i>call</i>
	<i>initiative</i>	<i>adequate</i>	<i>assume</i>
	<i>appropriate</i>	<i>adequately</i>	<i>deems</i>
	<i>adequate</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>expect</i>
	<i>comprehensive</i>	<i>within range</i>	<i>deemed</i>
	<i>reasonable</i>		<i>considering</i>
	<i>divisible</i>		<i>observe</i>
	<i>Proper</i>		
	<i>sound</i>		
	<i>unreservedly</i>		
	<i>whenever</i>		
	<i>accordingly</i>		
	<i>properly</i>		
	<i>usual</i>		

Further analysis of the corpus revealed the presence of lexical items that mark vagueness in the EPKA discourse. These are the verbs, auxiliaries, nominal group, adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases. They are divided into four groups according to their stylistic attributes of hedging; namely, probability, indetermination, approximation and subjectivization as shown in Table 6. The use of hedging found in the data confirms with Hyman (1994) position that hedging allows writers to express their uncertainty about the truth of their statements. A hedge may cause uncertainty in language, as can be seen in Examples (7-14) below.

Example 7: *Amendments. The agreement may be amended by written agreement of the parties (T1)*

Example 8: *It is recognized that Corporal Fodey Sankoh as a leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) could continue to play an active role and participate in the peace process. (T8)*

These examples are taken from the first group termed probability. Following Crompton (1997), “probability” is used in this study to mean the chance that the proposition expressed in a clause will be true. As a hedging strategy, probability expresses a degree of doubt in the truthfulness of an expression in a discourse. Grammatically, the use of the modals ‘*may*’ and ‘*could*’ in the above extracts create a probability in meaning-making thereby giving rise to double interpretation or ambiguity. For instance, the use of ‘*may*’ in example 7 gives the impression that the agreement is open to any form of amendments besides a written form. However, their presence in the EPKA discourse may necessarily not indicate vagueness for the EPKA drafters; rather, their usage in the corpus may be genre-specific since modal verbs are characteristic features of the language of law.

The second group of lexical items in Table 6 are classified as indetermination. Indetermination, as a hedging strategy, adds fuzziness or uncertainty to a proposition by making it less explicit and vaguer in terms of quality. The term is borrowed from Martin-Martin (2003), who defines it as endowing the proposition with a certain shade of lesser explicitness and more uncertainty. Let’s examine the extracts below:

Example 9: *All the population groups living in Côte d’Ivoire should therefore accept the current logic of peace and permanently abandon divisive attitudes and words, for the blood that has been shed during this war must serve as a foundation for a renewed drive towards brotherhood and solidarity. (T2)*

Example 10: *(vii) The Council shall also devise and implement appropriate procedural rules in respect of its operation. (T10)*

There is vagueness in the use of the nominal group ‘current logic of peace’ and in the use of the adjective appropriate in examples 9 and 10 above. This vagueness is created because the meanings of the two hedge markers cannot be readily determined within or outside the context of the EPKA texts. There are no definite ways to ascertain what a ‘*current logic of peace*’ and ‘*appropriate procedural rules*’ entail. Herein lies the imprecision claimed.

The third group of linguistic markers for hedging in the EPKA texts are classified as approximation. The words in this group possess the same attribute of “generalization” or “estimation” in the meaning they project in the EPKA texts. Riekkinen (2009) posits that such words can soften criticism. For instance, in examples 11 and 12 below, the hedge markers so underlined give room for vague interpretations as they do not stipulate the exact timing of when the events raised in the texts will occur. From a grammatical perspective, this hedging attribute is a convenient strategy that enables the drafters to avoid ‘strong claims’. Hence, Hyland (1998) refers to these lexical markers as “the manipulation of precision in quantification.”

Example 11: *3. The terms of the Agreement shall concurrently be communicated*

to the civilian population by radio, television, print, electronic and other media. An Implementation Timetable for the Agreement is hereby attached as Annex 3. (T3)

- Example 12:** 1. *Cessation of hostilities throughout Sierra Leone*
(a) *With immediate effect;*
(b) *Establish monitoring and verification mechanism. (T8)*

The last category of lexical markers for hedging in the EPKA texts is referred to as subjectivization. Subjectivization is a hedging strategy used by Martin-Martin (2003) to refer to lexical items and expressions which signal that what is being said is personal and subjective, and not necessarily the truth, thus inviting the reader to agree or disagree from a neutral position. This last group consists of lexical markers that require the use of personal pronouns as ‘subjects’ of the clause to denote vagueness in an agreement text. For instance, ‘*recommended*’ and ‘*exhort*’ are verbs that require personal pronouns as their ‘subject’ to ask certain individuals to carry out certain actions; however, these verbs do not in any way obligate them to carry out the actions. So, in the light of this, the reader of the EPKA texts can reject the ‘*recommendation*’ or the ‘*exhortation*’ in examples 13 and 14 below. This in itself can weaken the peacemaking process which the agreements are designed to achieve.

- Example 13:** *The interest of the various parties in Sierra Leone should be suitably accommodated. Accordingly, it is recommended that the new Cabinet should be a cabinet of inclusion. (T5)*

- Example 14:** *Exhort the national press to work to bring population groups together and to secure unity and national harmony, (T2)*

The examination of the strategies of hedges in the corpus has revealed that there are certain lexical markers in the EPKA texts that weaken statements. Without them, the propositions expressed in the statements will be straightforward and more falsifiable. However, vagueness and impression are often required in the EPKA texts as they may create different possibilities of term interpretation. The functions of hedges in the EPKA are best stated with Salagar-Meyer (1997) hedging functions. She gave four main functions of hedging but two of them adequately capture the functions of hedging in the EPKA texts.

According to Salagar-Meyer (1997, p. 106), hedging “minimizes potentially face-threatening situations”. By this, she means authors tend to tone down their statements in order to avoid personal accountability and consequently ward off embarrassing opposition, especially in the face of conflictive or contradictory evidence provided by another author. Secondly, hedging allows an author to conform to an “established writing style” (Salager-Meyer, 1997, p. 109) which is expected by a particular discourse community. Hedging is a genre-specific feature of legal discourse, as in legal texts it acquires functions and obtains effects which are not normally associated with other genres. This is due to the fact that a certain degree of hedging has become conventionalized within the legal profession. On the macro level, drafters of EPKA texts wish to gain entry into a legal discourse community. Since a degree of hedging has become conventionalized and is expected in legal genres, hedging allows the drafters to conform to the writing style which is acceptable within the legal discourse community.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data revealed a complex organization of information within the EPKA documents that would only be comprehensible to the highly educated. There appears to be no consideration given to semi-literate readers who form the majority of those actively involved in conflicts. This could be based on the belief that the information contained within the agreements texts are meant to be consumed by the highly educated members of the society or by those who have access to them. The study, therefore, concludes that indeed, the EPKA discourse is complex. And this complexity has a potential of hindering comprehension on the part of the peace negotiators giving rise to hegemony in the EPKA discourse.

REFERENCES

- Aw, F. & Cahyono, B.Y. (2012). The Lexical Richness in Narrative Texts of XI Graders of MAN 3 Malang. *English Language Education*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://journal-online.um.ac.id>
- Boutros, G. B. (1992). *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peace-making and Peacekeeping*. New York: United Nations.
- Brown, E. N. (1999). ECOWAS and the Liberia Experience: Peacekeeping and Self Preservation. A paper presented to the US Department of State. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko>
- Bulté, B., & Housen, A. (2012). Defining and Operationalising L2 Complexity. In A. Housen, F. Kuiken, & I. Vedder (Eds), *Dimensions of L2 Performance and Proficiency - Investigating Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency in SLA* (pp. 21-46). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Burns, L. C. (1991). *Vagueness: An Investigation into Natural Language and the Sorites Paradox*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Carter, R. (1987). *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Crompton, P. (1997). Hedging In Academic Writing: Some Theoretical Problems. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16(4), 271-287.
- Dawson, H. (1992). Avoid Redundancy in Writing. in *Helpful Hints for Technical Writing*. *Weed Technology* 6:782.
- Diessel, H. (2004). *The Acquisition of Complex Sentences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Doi:10.1017/CBO9780511486531](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486531).
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). Analysing accuracy, complexity, and fluency Analysing learner language (pp.139-164): Oxford University Press.
- Halliday M. A. K. (1989). *Spoken and Written Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hinkel, E. (2003). Simplicity without Elegance: Features of Sentences in L2 and L1 Academic Texts. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37: 275-301. Retrieved from <http://www.elihinkel.org/downloads.htm>
- Hinkel, E. (2005). Analyses of second language (L2) Texts and What can be Learnt from them. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 615-628. Retrieved from <http://www.elihinkel.org/downloads.htm>
- Hinkel, E. (2011). What Research on Second Language Writing Tells us and What it doesn't. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, 2: 523-538 New York: Routledge. Retrieved from www.elihinkel.org/downloads.htm

- Housen, Alex & Kuiken, F. and Vedder, Ineke. (2012). Complexity, accuracy and fluency. 10.1075/Illt.32.01hou.
- Housen, A. & Kuiken, F. (2009). Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency in Second Language Acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 461–473. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp048>
- Hunt, K. W. (1965). Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels. NCTE Research Report No. 3.
- Hyland, K. (1998). Exploring corporate rhetoric: metadiscourse in the CEO's letter. *Journal of Business Communication*, 35(2), 224-245.
- Maley, W. (1995). Peacekeeping and Peacemaking. In A Crisis of Expectations- UN Peacekeeping in the 1990s. (ed). Ramesh Thakur and Carlyle A. Thayer. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Martin-Martin, P. (2003). The Pragmatic Rhetorical Strategy of Hedging in Academic Writing. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*.
- Nichols, J. (1986). Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar. *Language* 62, 56–117.
- Ortega, L. (2003). Syntactic complexity measures and their relationship to L2 proficiency: A research synthesis of college-level L2 writing. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(4), 492–518.
- Riekkinen, N. (2009). Softening Criticism: The Use Of Lexical Hedges In Academic Spoken Interaction. Pro Gradu Thesis, University of Helsinki.
- Ruggie, J. (1995). *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Salagar-Meyer, F. (1997). I think that perhaps you should: A Study of Hedges in Written Scientific Discourse. in T. Miller (ed.), *Functional Approaches to Written Texts: Classroom Applications*. Washington D.C: English Language Programs- United States Information Agency, 105-118.
- Uesugi, Y. (2004). The Nexus between UN Peacekeeping and Human Security: Reviewing the Functions of UN Peacekeeping from a Perspective of Human Security. in *Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peace-Building*. eds. Hideaki Shinoda and Ho-Won Jeong. Hiroshima: Institute for Peace Science.
- Van Dijk., T.A. (2009). Critical Discourse Studies: A Sociocognitive Approach. in *Methods of Critical Analysis* (2nd Edn.). Wodak R. and M. Meyer (eds). London: Sage, 62-86.
- Washington (1998). United States Department of State, ECOWAS Background Notes.
- Yabi, G. O. (2010). The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict: The Cases of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. www.fes-westafrica.org/abuja. Accessed 25th of February 2012.