



Graphological Deviation on Instagram Captions (A Stylistics Study) (*Penyimpangan Grafologi pada caption Instagram (Studi Stilistika)*)

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Article history: Received: 22 April 2025 Revised: 29 April 2025 Accepted: 30 April 2025 Keywords: Graphological Deviation Instagram Captions Social Media Communication Kata Kunci: <i>Penyimpangan Grafologi Keterangan Instagram Komunikasi Media Sosial</i>	Language plays a crucial role in digital communication, and platforms like Instagram serve as key spaces for self-expression. This study investigates graphological deviations in Instagram captions, focusing on typography, spelling and grammar, and punctuation to understand their impact on written communication in social media. This research adopted a qualitative descriptive approach, analyzing captions from English Language Education Department students' Instagram accounts to identify and categorize graphological deviations. Data collection involved selecting captions with deviations in spelling, punctuation, and typography, followed by analysis using theories from Verdonk (2002) and Simpson (2004). The findings reveal that graphological deviations are intentionally employed to enhance aesthetics, convey emotions, and establish a relaxed, informal tone. Three main categories emerged: (1) Spelling and Grammar, which featured informal abbreviations and creative word formations and accounted for 10 instances; (2) Punctuation, where unconventional uses of quotation marks, ellipses, and dashes added emphasis and emotional depth, with 7 instances identified and (3) Typography, where unique fonts, emojis, and text layouts enhanced visual appeal, with 4 instances recorded. While such deviations may reduce clarity and professionalism, they significantly shape message reception in social media contexts. The study concludes that graphological deviations are a stylistic choice prioritizing aesthetics and emotional engagement over linguistic norms. Future research can explore their visual and emotional impact, typographic effectiveness, and multilingual adaptations in digital media. Abstrak Bahasa memainkan peran penting dalam komunikasi digital, dan media seperti Instagram menjadi ruang utama untuk mengekspresikan diri. Penelitian ini menyelidiki penyimpangan grafologis dalam caption (takarir) Instagram, dengan fokus pada tipografi, ejaan dan tata bahasa, serta tanda baca untuk memahami dampaknya terhadap komunikasi tertulis di media sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan menganalisis caption dari akun Instagram mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengkategorikan penyimpangan grafologis. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan memilih caption yang mengandung penyimpangan dalam hal ejaan, tanda baca, dan tipografi, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teori dari Verdonk (2002) dan Simpson (2004). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyimpangan grafologis sengaja digunakan untuk meningkatkan estetika, menyampaikan emosi, dan menciptakan nuansa santai dan informal. Tiga kategori utama muncul dalam temuan ini: (1) Ejaan dan Tata Bahasa, yang menampilkan singkatan informal dan pembentukan kata yang kreatif, ditemukan dalam 10

kasus; (2) Tanda Baca, yang mencakup penggunaan tanda kutip, elipsis, dan tanda hubung secara tidak konvensional untuk menambah penekanan dan kedalaman emosi, ditemukan dalam 7 kasus; dan (3) Tipografi, di mana penggunaan font unik, emoji, dan tata letak teks memperkuat daya tarik visual, ditemukan dalam 4 kasus. Meskipun penyimpangan ini dapat mengurangi kejelasan dan kesan profesional, penyimpangan grafologis sangat mempengaruhi cara pesan diterima dalam konteks media sosial. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa penyimpangan grafologis merupakan pilihan gaya yang mengutamakan estetika dan keterlibatan emosional dibandingkan norma-norma linguistik. Direkomendasikan bahwa penelitian selanjutnya dapat mengeksplorasi dampak visual dan emosional, efektivitas tipografi, serta adaptasi multibahasa dalam media digital.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in communication, both in spoken and written forms. As a global language, English has become an essential means of interaction among people worldwide. It is not only widely spoken but also serves as the primary language in several countries. With the rise of digital communication, language has gained even greater significance, particularly in social media. The language used in social media can shape a user's identity, as the words and expressions in posts often reflect personality and social affiliations. The study of language, known as linguistics, examines various aspects of communication, including its structure, meaning, and usage in different contexts (Akmajian et al., 2017).

One of the key branches of linguistics is stylistics, which focuses on analyzing language style in both spoken and written texts. Stylistics is particularly concerned with literary works and explores why writers choose specific words and expressions (Manqoush & Al-Wadhaf, 2021). Beyond literature, stylistics also helps in characterizing language styles based on regional and social variations (Hassan, 2024). According to Jeffries (2023), stylistics is a method of textual interpretation that prioritizes language, as linguistic structures serve as essential indicators of a text's function. Within stylistics, different levels of analysis exist, including graphology, which examines the visual aspects of written language (Jiménez, 2015). Graphology provides insights into how a text's appearance influences its interpretation, whether it is formal or informal, targeted at adults or children, or intended to be taken seriously (Gómez-Jiménez, 2015).

In the modern era, social media has introduced new styles of language use (Page et al., 2022), with platforms like Instagram becoming central to self-expression. Instagram users frequently write captions in English to enhance their posts and reach a global audience. However, many users do not adhere to proper language rules, leading to deviations in writing style. These deviations, particularly in graphological features, affect how messages are perceived and understood. Given the increasing influence of Instagram as a communication platform, this study examines graphological deviations in Instagram captions from a stylistic perspective. This study aims to analyze and explain graphological deviations in Instagram captions from a stylistic perspective. By examining how users deviate from standard writing conventions, this research highlights the impact of these variations on readability and interpretation. Understanding graphological deviations is essential, as the way language is visually presented influences how messages are perceived by readers.

Furthermore, this research is significant in providing insights for social media users, particularly teenagers and influencers, to improve their writing style when creating captions. By raising awareness of proper language use, this study encourages users to write captions that are clear, effective, and easily understood. Additionally, this research contributes to the field of linguistics, particularly in stylistic studies, and serves as a motivation for scholars and readers interested in exploring language use in digital communication.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative design. The research data are derived from social media usage, specifically by analyzing captions posted on Instagram, which serves as a medium for exchanging ideas. The focus of this research is a graphological analysis of photo captions on Instagram. According to Atmowardoyo (2018), descriptive analysis aims to describe existing phenomena as accurately as possible. This method is suitable for analyzing and preserving authentic language errors made by social media users in writing comments or captions. The data source consists of Instagram post captions from students of the English Language Education Department. The data include words, phrases, or sentences that exhibit graphological deviations.

2.1 Data Collection

For data collection, the researcher gathered captions from the Instagram accounts of English Language Education Department students that used English and contained graphological deviations. After accessing Instagram, the researcher searched for each student's username and identified captions with graphological deviations. Selected captions were then collected after obtaining approval from the Instagram account owners, using contact information or email addresses provided for social and academic purposes. The approved captions were screenshotted and stored as soft files to serve as the research data. The captions were then filtered further to select utterances directly related to the research problem, and classified according to specific elements of graphological deviation.

2.2 Data Analysis

For data analysis, this study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The analysis began by compiling a list of Instagram captions containing graphological deviations. The researcher then carefully read and comprehended the data to gain a deeper understanding before proceeding with a more detailed analysis. Captions were selected and classified based on particular elements of graphology. The classified data were analyzed using the theoretical frameworks of Verdonk (2002) and Simpson (2004), supplemented by insights from other relevant experts on graphological deviation. Each caption was examined according to linguistic graphological elements to identify patterns and variations in language use. Finally, the findings were interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of graphological deviations in Instagram captions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher identified 21 research data from Instagram captions posted by students of the English Language Education Department. The study classified these data into three main categories related to graphological deviation: Spelling and Grammar, Punctuation, and Typography. Each category focuses on specific aspects of text presentation and accuracy; Spelling and Grammar had 10 data, Punctuation had 7 data, and Typography had 4 data. In the data below, there are also several pieces of data that can fall into more than one category, with different focuses of discussion. The absence of any specified arrangements, such as text placement or element spacing, means that no data falls under the Layout category. The observed variations are not so much related to the arrangement of the text on the page or in a space, but rather to the usage of letters and punctuation.

Spelling and Grammar, Punctuation, and Typography are key aspects of graphological deviation analysis in text. Spelling and Grammar encompass errors in word spelling and sentence structure that can disrupt the clarity and accuracy of the text. Punctuation includes the use of punctuation marks like periods, commas, and exclamation points, which influence the structure and comprehension of the text. Typography involves the choice and arrangement of fonts, font sizes, and text layout, which can affect readability and the overall appearance of the document. Together, these elements determine how well a text is presented and understood by readers.

In conducting this study, the researcher faced several challenges, including private Instagram profiles, the absence of captions, non-English captions, and changing usernames. These issues limited data collection, resulting in only 21 usable data. Despite these obstacles, the study successfully categorized and analyzed the data according to the aspects of graphological deviation, offering valuable insights into text presentation and accuracy in social media contexts.

3.1 Spelling and Grammar

3.1.1 Datum 1

“there’s alight at the end of the tunnel❤️”

The sentence above is to illustrate that there is hope and relief in the midst of difficulty or darkness. The author uses "there's" not "there is" because "there's" is an abbreviation of "there is". Meanwhile, the writing of the word "alight" is a phrase consisting of two words, namely "a" and "light", which should be written correctly as "a light" not "alight". However, here the author has a unique or experimental writing style so he uses the word "alight" as his stylistic choice and this word is usually used in a specific context such as when writing captions.

Meanwhile, the black love emoticon "❤️" is often used to describe deep love or sincere affection. In the context of the sentence above, the author chose black emoticons because he wanted to emphasize that hope and affection are not just hopes but deep and sincere affection.

3.1.2 Datum 2

“been living in the same roof w these 2 girlies for the past 8 months 🧑🏻🧑🏻”

The caption above has a positive and pleasant tone which makes readers feel that the author has a good relationship with his friends. Writing the word "with" which is shortened to "w" is an informal context, where writing "w" is faster and more practical than writing "with". On some social media platforms there are also character limits that can be used in a post, therefore writing the word "w" helps save characters.

Meanwhile, the word "girlies" is used to describe female friends. Using words like this makes the caption look more modern and relaxed. Then the addition of the emoji “🧑🏻🧑🏻” was used to describe the friendship and closeness between the author and his friends.

3.1.3 Datum 3

“we spent good good times togethaa”

The caption above shows that they have a close and relaxed relationship with the people they are with, and want to share pleasant memories with them. Meanwhile, the use of the words "good good" and "togethaa" is informal and relaxed language writing which shows that they prefer to appear relaxed and informal. The purpose of writing the caption is more in the context of writing on social media, where in social media informal and relaxed language is more commonly used.

3.1.4 Datum 4

“nu years’ haul”

The caption above uses informal and relaxed language which shows that the writer wants to appear more relaxed and less formal. Writers use informal words, such as "nu" instead of "new", which shows that they want to write faster and shorter. The purpose of the caption is to be used in the context of social media, such as Instagram or Facebook, where informal and relaxed language is more commonly used.

Meanwhile, writing (haul) has the aim of showing that they have a new and fun haul (shopping) in the new year, and want to share this fun with their friends. The authors also chose to use creative words, such as “haul” to describe their shopping, which shows that they wanted to write in a more interesting and creative way. Meanwhile Use of apostrophes: Writers use apostrophes to describe the new year, which shows that they want to write in a more relaxed and informal way.

3.2 Punctuation

3.2.1 Datum 1

“you’ll never know the ‘value’ of ‘a moment’ until it becomes ‘a memory’” -sunset-1st April,2022.

This sentence uses a poetic and reflective writing style. The use of quotation marks around the words "value", "a moment", and "a memory" shows that the author wants to emphasize the importance of these concepts, the use of simple but profound words makes the sentence sound very wise.

Meaning and Message This sentence talks about the importance of appreciating the moments in life before they become memories. The author wants to convey that we will never realize the true value of a moment until we lose it and it becomes a memory. This message invites readers to appreciate the time and moments they have more.

3.2.2 Datum 2

“Rise and Shine.. March 31, 2019.”

The meaning of the dots is to show that there are sentences or thoughts that are not written explicitly. These dots can be interpreted as, stopping a sentence that does not need to be continued, also indicating that there is something else you want to say but does not need to be written and indicating that the sentence is enough to convey the message and inviting the reader to think further about the meaning of the sentence. Then, in the context of this sentence, the dots can be interpreted as indicating that life must continue and there is no need to get caught up in thoughts of revenge.

3.2.3 Datum 3

“your pov –“

The sentence "your pov" is an abbreviation of "your point of view" which means "your point of view" or "your perspective". In the context of social media, especially on platforms such as TikTok or Instagram, "your pov" is often used as a caption or comment to invite other people to share their point of view or perspective on a topic or situation. By using “your pov,” others are invited to share their opinions or experiences, thereby sparking deeper discussions or interactions.

In the context of writing "your pov –" the hyphen (-) that follows indicates that the sentence is not finished. The hyphen (-) can also be interpreted as an invitation or invitation to continue the sentence. In some contexts the hyphen (-) can also be interpreted as a replacement for a period (.) or a comma (,). So,

"your pov –" can be interpreted as an invitation to continue the sentence by adding your own point of view or perspective.

3.2.4 Datum 4

/cloud.nine

"Cloud nine" is an idiom that means "a state of extreme happiness and contentment" or "the peak of happiness." In the context of social media, "/cloud.nine" is often used as a caption or comment to express feelings of happiness, satisfaction, or euphoria. This expression can be used to describe a very pleasant situation, such as achieving a goal or dream. By using "/cloud.nine", one can express their feelings of happiness and satisfaction in a relaxed and informal way.

Meanwhile, the use of the punctuation mark "/" can have several meanings, including replacing a period or comma. In the context of social media, the punctuation mark "/" can be used to indicate a relationship or connection between words or concepts. In some cases, the punctuation "/" can be used to indicate irony or sarcasm in a sentence. However, in the context of the caption "/cloud.nine", the punctuation "/" is more likely to be used as a hyphen or connection, to show that the words "cloud" and "nine" are related and form a larger concept, namely "cloud nine" which means a state of very high happiness and satisfaction.

3.3 Typography

3.3.1 Datum 1

“(another) moments to (more) memories 🌈”

In the context of typography, the caption uses several techniques to enhance the impression and meaning of the text. Brackets (()) are used to separate certain words from the main sentence so as to emphasize these words. In this caption "(another)" and "(more)" are bracketed to show that these words are additions or explanations to the main sentence.

Then lowercase and uppercase letters are used to create contrast and emphasis in the sentence. In this caption the letter "m" in "moments" and "memories" is capitalized so as to emphasize these words. Meanwhile, space and distance are used to create a more relaxed and informal impression. In this caption, the space between the words is large enough to give a more relaxed and informal impression. Meanwhile, emoji (🌈) is used to add emotional nuances and a more positive impression to sentences. In this caption, the 🌈 emoji is used to show a warmer and more positive impression.

3.3.2 Datum 2

“be(you)tiful

Writing the caption "be(you)tiful" gives a more unique and creative impression compared to the more general word "beautiful" or which is in accordance with good and correct language rules. The use of brackets "(you)" puts emphasis on the word "you" thereby making the word "beautiful" more personal and related to the individual. The words "be(you)tiful" give a more informal and relaxed impression which fits the more relaxed and informal feel of Instagram. Then using the words "be(you)tiful" allows them to express their creativity and individuality.

In the context of typography, the use of the word "be(you)tiful" can be used to create a more creative and unique impression in a design, express a more relaxed and pleasant tone and atmosphere, and add more positive and pleasant expressions and emotions to a text. Meanwhile, in stylistics, the use of the word "be(you)tiful" can be used to create a more aesthetic and unique impression as well as to express creativity and individuality.

3.3.3 Datum 3

“Vitsea 🌊”

Using the word "vitsea" gives a more unique and creative impression compared to the more common word "vitamin sea". The word "vitsea" has a simpler and more elegant shape and structure, giving a more aesthetic impression. The word "vitsea" also gives a more informal and laid-back feel, which fits the more relaxed and informal feel of Instagram.

In the context of typography, the use of the word "vitsea" can be used to create a more creative and unique impression in a design, express a more relaxed and pleasant tone and atmosphere, and add more positive and pleasant expressions and emotions to a text. Meanwhile in stylistics, the use of the word "vitsea" can be used to create a more aesthetic and unique impression, as well as to express creativity and individuality.

3.3.4 Datum 4

“always say yes to holiyay! 🎉”

As in social language in general, in stylistics, the use of the word "holiyay" can be used to create a more aesthetic and unique impression, as well as to express creativity and individuality. Using the word "holiyay" gives a more unique and aesthetic impression compared to the more common word "holiday". The word "holiyay" has a more relaxed and pleasant tone and atmosphere that suits the holiday atmosphere. In the context of typography, the use of the word "holiyay" can be used to create a more creative and unique

impression in a design and can express a more relaxed and pleasant tone and atmosphere and add more positive and pleasant expressions and emotions to a text.

Graphological anomalies, such as disorganized, sloppy, or error-ridden writing, often reflect psychological and emotional fluctuations. The necessity of precise spelling is crucial to maintaining message integrity. While symbols like black heart emojis convey solemnity, spelling errors can undermine professionalism and effectiveness. Akbar et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of accurate spelling for clarity, reinforcing that errors in spelling and grammar—such as replacing "w" with "with" or "2" with "two"—convey informality but may compromise clarity. This aligns with Nikade (2022), who argues that informal abbreviations can diminish professionalism. Although social media often embraces casual language, maintaining correct grammar remains essential for effective communication, as highlighted by Ramzan et al. (2023).

The use of non-standard punctuation, such as single quotation marks around words like "value," "moment," and "memory," enhances their prominence. Mehta and Yadav (2023) suggest that typography influences reader engagement, with unconventional punctuation helping to create distinctiveness and emotional depth. Such stylistic choices encourage deeper semantic resonance, making the text more memorable. This deliberate use of punctuation also amplifies the contrast between sincerity and insincerity within captions. The findings indicate that graphological deviations, including unconventional typography, enhance digital communication by increasing engagement and emotional impact. While adherence to orthographic conventions ensures clarity and professionalism, particularly in tone-sensitive contexts, non-standard punctuation adds a modern and distinctive visual appeal. The forward slash, for instance, introduces a futuristic quality, situating messages within contemporary discourse and heightening their visual impact.

Innovative typography, including bracketed emphasis, contributes to reader engagement and retention by enhancing both visual appeal and semantic resonance. The use of italicized text for specific words further highlights key ideas and attracts reader attention. Such typographical variations emphasize distinct emotional nuances within a text, reinforcing the idea that life's unpredictability is a shared human experience. These deliberate deviations enhance message clarity and impact, making them powerful tools in digital communication.

The use of informal language, including abbreviations like "w," creates a relaxed and casual atmosphere. However, Natsir et al. (2023) argue that excessive informality and abbreviations may reduce clarity and professionalism in written discourse. Despite this, casual stylistic choices can facilitate audience engagement in specific contexts, emphasizing the importance of situational adaptability. Han (2024) further explains that informal language and emoticons contribute to a conversational tone in digital communication, reinforcing the role of context in message interpretation. While lowercase letters and minimal punctuation may introduce ambiguity, their visually appealing nature, combined with wordplay, fosters a friendly and accessible ambience.

This study demonstrates that graphological deviations—such as non-standard punctuation and typography—are effective tools for increasing engagement and emotional resonance in digital communication. However, Deane (2018) stresses the importance of adhering to orthographic conventions to maintain clarity and professionalism, particularly in tone-sensitive settings. Social media language exhibits distinct characteristics that differentiate it from both formal and spoken language. The analysis reveals that English department students intentionally incorporate graphological deviations, fully aware of their unconventional choices, as a means of stylistic expression within social media discourse, prioritizing aesthetic appeal over strict linguistic accuracy.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

This research highlights how graphological deviations in written communication—such as typography, spelling and grammar, and punctuation—impact the effectiveness and perception of messages. Typography deviations, such as the creative use of parentheses, emojis, and non-standard fonts, enhance the visual appeal and conceptual depth of texts, making them more engaging and impactful. Deviations in spelling and grammar can undermine professionalism and clarity, with errors potentially leading to misunderstandings or a perception of carelessness. Punctuation deviations, such as unconventional use of quotation marks, ellipses, and dashes, add emphasis and can create distinct visual and emotional effects, drawing attention to key elements of the message. Overall, these deviations play a significant role in shaping how messages are received, highlighting the importance of both creative expression and adherence to conventional standards in effective written communication.

Social media discourse exhibits distinct linguistic features differing from formal and oral communication. This study investigates graphological anomalies and their underlying rationales. An

examination of English department students revealed intentional usage of errors, despite awareness of their non-standard nature, aiming to craft aesthetically appealing sentences emblematic of social media language.

4.2 Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for researchers exploring similar topics on typography and graphology. Researchers are advised to further investigate the visual impact of typography on readers' perception and comprehension. This can be done through visual experiments that measure the effects of various elements such as fonts, font sizes, colors, and text layouts on different demographics. Additionally, exploring the emotional connections with typography is crucial. Research can focus on how different styles and typographic elements trigger specific emotional responses, conducting psychological studies to understand their impact on readers' emotions and moods.

Developing evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of typography in communication is also beneficial. These tools or metrics can be used to evaluate the visual, aesthetic, and communicative impact of different typographic styles. Furthermore, studying the use of typography in digital media is highly relevant in the modern era. Researchers can focus on how typography is utilized across various digital platforms like websites, social media, and mobile apps, and how typographic elements can be optimized for digital screens and user interactions.

Finally, analyzing typography in a multilingual context can provide valuable insights into how typography affects communication in different languages. This research could include studying the adaptation of typography for languages with different character sets and how this impacts readers' perception and comprehension. By following these recommendations, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the role of typography in visual communication and aesthetics.

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