A PRAGMA – SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF GRAFFITI OF KADUNA POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS

BY

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BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
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DECLARATION

I sincerely declare that this thesis entitled "A Pragma-Semiotic Analysis of Graffiti of Kaduna Polytechnic Students", is a product of my personal research in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria under the supervision of Dr. G. Ibileye and Prof. A.A Joshua. All sources of information in the research are duly acknowledged and a list of reference provided.

I declare that this thesis has not been presented or submitted in any previous application for the award of Master of Arts in English Language or any other degree in any University or Institution.

_____ _____

ACHI, PATRICIA SARAH DATE

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "A Pragma-Semiotic Analysis of Graffiti of Kaduna Polytechnic Students" by Achi, Patricia Sarah meets the regulations governing the award of degree of Master of Arts of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and scholarly presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Jason and Jemimah Bahago.

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ABSTRACT

This work is a pragma-semiotic analysis of graffiti of Kaduna Polytechnic students. Graffiti refer to the crude inscriptions or drawings which can be found on the doors and walls of public places. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the signification systems involved in students' graffiti, hence the employment of elements of pragmatics and semiotics necessary for the interpretation of the various meanings and their effect on the decoders. The fact that there is fluidity of pragmatics in semiotics and the effect of this is the prompt interpretation of symbols and reaction to the systems of signs. The pragma-semiotic theory therefore, investigates the totality of signification systems, linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (pictorial, colour, image etc). The findings from this study concludes that students graffiti are meant to inform the decoder, affect his/her opinions by persuading him/her towards a particular point of view, influence and orient him/her morally towards more beneficial and positive goals, warn about impending danger, and generally integrate everyone for mass participation in the desired and altruistic regeneration of development efforts. Most importantly, student' graffiti are found to be verdictives, exersitives, commissives, behavitives and expositives which account for the perlocutionary effect on the decoder. The study arrived at such findings by integrating Austin, Searle and Adegbija's theory of speech acts and Peirce's theory of 'semeiois'.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Banish the use of the four-letter words
Whose meaning is never obscure;
The Anglos, the Saxons, those bawdy old birds
Were vulgar, obscene, and impure.
But cherish the use of the weaseling phrase
That never quite says what it means;
You'd better be known for your hypocrite ways
Than vulgar, impure and obscene.

OG'DEN NASH, "Ode to the Four-Letter Words."

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The need to communicate is a powerful and consuming one. Language is the vehicle that man has devised to satisfy such need. “The kind of language that man uses, hears, or reads shapes, to a surprising extent, the world he lives in” (Adedimeji, 2002). Without language, there is no society, and without society, man, a social animal, does not exist.

Many scholars have defined language, with most of them accentuating their curiosities. “It has been an object of fascination and a subject for enquiry for over two hundred years”, (Crystal, 1997:400). Cited in Crystal (1997:400) are scholars such as Sapir (1921), who defines language as "a purely human, non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols" and Trager (1949), who posits that it is "a system

of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which the members of a society interact in terms of their total culture". Crystal further cites Chomsky (1959) and Hall (1964) who opine respectively that language is "a set (finite and infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of *a* finite set of elements" and "the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols." To Bloomfield, as quoted in Chomsky (1986:16), "language is the totality of utterances that can be made in a speech community" and it is no less than "a human instrument of expression through sounds as released by vocal chords" Quirk (1962:42). While Cruse (1990:140) technically defines language as a "system of conventional signs all aspects of whose structure serve the sovereign function of meaning". Watson and Hill (1993:170) conceive language as "a system of signs and representations, arranged by codes and articulated through various discourses".

It can be surmised from the foregoing that language is a system of signs, verbal or non-verbal, through which human beings in their varying cultures and contexts exchange ideas and communicate feelings. As a result, we are beset with ambiguities as in the case with messages inherent in these signs and representations. Each person

interpreting a particular sign in terms of his/her own experience may incorrectly assume that a given code means the same thing to every body. In fact, we are often misled into believing that our shared use of languages denote a shared wealth of experience.

1.1 WORDS, LANGUAGE AND FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

"The component parts of language are, of course, words" (Pryse, 1984:1). They are the blocks, in their various hues, sizes and classes, with which the magnificent building of language is constructed. Without words, which we use essentially to communicate, there is no language; without language, there is no society; and without society, man, a social animal does not exist. In fact, given that all other forms of human communication are confined to certain fields of expression, "there is no substitute for words" (Boulton 1960:8).

Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus (2007) defines "word" as "a single unit of language in speech or writing; talk, discussion, a message; a promise; a command; information;……" For the purpose of this study, "word" is considered a unit of meaning. Every word must give a "sense" prompted by general / conventional or specific / contextual determinism.

Today, we are living in a world of words. The preponderance of information available to us in our modern world makes people talk of "information explosion". For everywhere one goes in our campuses, words are there on the walls with (un) intelligible messages with different shapes, sizes and colours,. "Today's world solely depends on words: how to form them; use or manipulate them, interpret and reconstruct them to fashion out reality" (Adedimeji, 1999:2).

Man is the only creature that uses words intentionally and habitually. As noted by Boulton (1960:3), a parrot or a Mynah may talk in fashion, but it would be impossible to discuss any subject with a talking bird. Therefore, given the peculiar nature of students, one of their main pre occupations is doing "things with words", as Austin (1962) advances.

According to Birk and Birk (1959:3), mere words can make and prevent wars, create understanding or inflame prejudice, form constitutions or destroy them, sell, shoddy or superior products or ideas, justify man's worst actions or express his highest ideas. "Words engineering", if one may conveniently propose that term, is just one business of graffitists, justifying the adages, words cut keener than knives" and "the pen is mightier than the sword".

When words are assembled and organized in the acceptable conventional and logical order, both paradigmatically and syntagmatically, what is realized is language. Language is thus the physical structure constructed when some / all levels of linguistic study are put into work: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatic. “It is through the manifestation of these, wholly or partly, that language attains its essence as a restatement of symbolic transformation of experience” (Brooks, 1964:99).

As non-specialists are bound to say, the basic function of language is "to send information" or "to tell other people your thoughts" (Adegbite, 2000:67). Moreover, the Functions of language are many and have been characterized by experts. Language functions, according to Jakobson as later developed by Hymes (cited in Adegbite, 2000:68) include the emotive function (communicating the inner states and emotions of the addresser), the conative function (using vocatives and imperatives to call the attention of another or requiring them to carry cut some action), the phatic function (opening the channel and checking that it is working for social reasons), the poetic function (choosing a particular form as the essence of message) and metalinguistic function (focusing attention on the code itself, to clarify

it or negotiate it). All these are "micro functions" developed from the elements of communication or "macro functions" (Adegbite, 2000:68).

Halliday (1973) observes that language has three functions which are ideational (an expression of content or message), interpersonal (sharing of one's feelings, ideas and emotions with others) and textual (creation of text, through which a link is made between language and situation).

Crystal (1997: 10-13) contends that language is used for eight purposes. He identifies and explains that language is used for:

i) Communication of ideas
ii) Emotional expression (as in frustration);
iii) Social interaction (i.e. greeting);
iv) The power of sound (i.e. alliteration);
v) The control of reality (i.e. magic or incantation);
vi) Recording the facts;
vii) The instrument of thought; and
viii) The expression of identity (i.e. the signaling of who we are and where we belong).

In line with the above, this study examines graffiti, which is an aspect of students' life on campus. Students graffiti is predominantly a language of signs and representations which depict their beliefs,

experiences and practices. These various forms of writing are acts of communication which aim to produce a particular effect on the public depending on what is written on the walls. Hence, each time they are depicted, the writers want to influence the public through their beliefs and values, trying to portray who they are and what they believe in.

1.2 WRITTEN VS SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Linguistic scholars are generally not agreed on the exact relationship between spoken and written language. Quite a number of scholars subscribe to the 'Doctrine of Independence' which argues that the grapheme and the phonemes should be seen as separate and independent of each other. Others maintain that there is mutual relationship between the two.

It was not until the 1960s that the 'Doctrine of Independence' became central in linguistics. The number of its supporters multiplied considerably during this time. Notable among them were Hyelmslev (1953); A. Penttila (1932); McLaughlin (1963); McIntosh A (1966) and to some extent, D.L Bolinger (1946) and W. Hass (1970). Though these people subscribe to the doctrine, they still acknowledge the similarities between spoken and written language.

The Finis linguist, A. Penttila, is believed to be the pioneer of the 'Doctrine of Independence'. He maintained in 1932 that the graphemic language be regarded as an independent symbol system from the phonemic system (Fishman, 1997). He however, later contradicted himself by adding that both systems need not be mutually exclusive of each other as there is an extensive correspondence between them.

On his part, Angus McIntosh (1966) argues that the written language system differs from speech especially in their expression. While the written language is visual, speech is purely auditory and acoustic. He however confesses that both systems are in a sort of filial relationship within the entire language system. According to him, "written language and spoken language both symbolize mental experience, but the written language by virtue of its graphological system, also symbolizes spoken language" (McIntosh,1966:99).

In his own contribution, Louis Hjelmslev contends that writing and speech are two different manifestation (or what he calls "expression substances") of the same expressive form called 'language'. Elaborating on this point further, Hjelmslev says, "Our something, that which is common to sound and letters alike is a form (i.e language), but the substance of ink (i.e. writing has not received the same

attention that linguists have lavishly bestowed on the substances of air" (i.e. speech) (Hjelmslev, 1953:67). What Hjelmslev implies here is that language scholars tend to devote more time and space to the study of spoken language than the written form, though he considers both forms as mutually related.

Also in support of the 'Doctrine of independence' is John McLaughlin. To him, there is no question of one kind of expression revealing something significant about the other. This implies that speech and writing are mutually independent of each other and both should be treated as such. In one of his works, however, he maintains, "system as independent mode of language expression and as a system of signs representing segments in the spoken language system" (McLaughlin, 1963:23). This statement sharply contradicts his apparent support for the 'Doctrine of Independence'. He continues with this contradiction when he says, "one of the most interesting features of an alphabetic writing system is, of course, that as a system of signs, it provides the basis for assumptions about the structure of the spoken system..." By this statement, McLaughlin once again reaffirms the mutual relationship between speech and writing. In his book titled *Language* (1946:333), L. Bolinger who is also a proponent of the 'Doctrine of Independence', argues that "writing can

exist as a series of morphemes at its own level...” he inevitably admits later that writing may interact with the “more fundamental vocal-auditory morphemes" which relate to speech. He also admits that “most writing is the graphic representation of the vocal-auditory processes.” These statements only lay credence to the mutual relationship between the two systems. This discussion cannot be complete without a look at the views of renown linguists like W. Haas and C.V Taylor. Both names represent yet another view within the school of thought that strongly supports the ‘Doctrine of Independence’. Unlike other members of the same group, however, the two scholars base their stand on translation.

W. Hass’ theory of translatability (Haas, 1970) seems to isolate speech from writing. However, this theory is not illuminating as there is extensive evidence of correspondence between the speech and writing of the same language as far as the matching of phonemes with appropriate graphemes is concerned. Therefore, there cannot be any easy and effective translation if two languages differ in various respects and at all levels. This argument clearly disproves the validity of Hass’ theory. In support of Hass’ Theory of Translatability’, C.V. Taylor says, "The fact that, so far as we know, writing systems have not appeared without being based in some way upon speech does

not mean they could not do so" (Tauli, 1977:20). It can be gathered from this statement that Taylor regards speech and writing as two separate dimensions of language. The argument here is that translation mainly renders the semantic meaning of another language, but only a part of the syntactic structure. This is because various structural features are untranslatable. On the contrary, writing renders most of the syntactic, morphological and phonological features of speech. This argument also disproves the validity of the 'theory of translatability as well as the 'Doctrine of Independence'.

Ibileye (2002) in his own view acknowledges that, "…Writing is an imperfect representation of speech because it is incapable of reflecting several features, which are peculiar to the spoken language".

It is pertinent to say, at this juncture, that the relationship between speech and writing is not that of mutual independence as some scholars claim. Rather, it is that of mutual correspondence. This involves the matching of graphemes with appropriate phonemes. And the structural similarity between the written language and the spoken form is referred to as 'isomorphism' (Tauli 1977).

However, Buhler (reported in Innis (1982:152-3) draws attention to the need to describe 'the concrete speech event' as a

means of representation in language description, he asks the question:

> ‘How do we go about representing something?...
>
> ‘How can (a speaker) ‘avail himself of the structures of his language...? How can he (whether conceiving, imitating or creating is irrelevant) so realize them in the sound stream of speech such that representations result?

This question can be attempted .through the analysis of graffiti, a living example of written language in use, to verify how representation results in language. Therefore, despite the primacy of the spoken over the written language, the written word is often regarded with excessive reverence. Undoubtedly the stability, permanence and graphic nature of writing causes linguists to favour it over ephemeral and elusive speech. Graffiti is the name for images or lettering scratched, scrawled, painted or marked in any manner on property. Graffiti is sometimes regarded as a form of art and other times regarded as unsightly damage or unwanted phenomenon.

This perception of graffiti is captured by Ibileye (2002) who asserts that “The impulse to paint, draw, or write on walls, to express political beliefs, or communicate with an anonymous audience is also manifest

in today's urban environment where it is often perceived as a scourge".

He further adds that:

> Graffiti can be found in virtually all parts of the world and especially where youth predominate. Youth, especially on university campuses, have found the graffiti a convenient medium to express themselves both in social and political terms.

Therefore, the fact that graffiti is a language event makes it "a pivots for the spontaneous transfer of thought and concepts found to be descriptive of the relevant society" Medubi (2007) especially university and polytechnic campuses. It is very common to find writings on the walls of classrooms, in toilets and virtually all public places expressing some mild opinions about fellow students, teachers and the political situation of the community outside the university and polytechnic campus and even on global issues in general.

Students' graffiti is found to be "important to the linguist because the language employed is closer to the spoken language of the period and place than on the usual written language" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992:405). In spite of its universal nature, Gari (1993) says that scholars have hardly focused on studying graffiti; it has been relatively unexplored in terms of its complex nature.

1.3 GRAFFITI AS A PHENOMENON

Graffiti has traditionally been associated with delinquency and disruptive urban youth. “Some associate graffiti with vandalism and the destruction of property. Others see graffiti as art”(http://www.cgraffitihurts.org/learnmorefacts.ctm). Currently, the word “graffiti” is used to describe everything from scribbles on bathroom walls and scratched names on bus windows to gang tags and graffiti influenced - paint on canvas.

According to http://www.cfraffitihurts.org/learnmore/facts.cfm, there are four primary motivating factors for graffiti vandalism: fame, rebellion, self expression and power. Getting the media to publish photos and video tape of graffiti is often the ultimate fame for graffiti vandals.

However, with the spread of graffiti outside the cities and recognized as a legitimate form of art, people of varying ages, socio-economic backgrounds, heritage and education participate in graffiti production. Some advertising and marketing firms now commission graffiti artists to paint walls and create logos that will appeal to an urban clientele. Students, especially of higher institutions of learning employ graffiti on classroom walls, toilets and bathrooms as outlets for otherwise repressed feelings, pinions and thoughts which are meant to inform

the reader, affect his opinions by persuading him towards a particular point of view, influence and orient him morally towards more beneficial and positive goals, warn about impending danger and generally integrate everyone for mass participation in developmental efforts.

In all graffiti expound on contemporary issues in a language involving the use of signs, drawings, paintings and pictures which are in most cases difficult to explicate at the surface level. This agrees with Yule (1996:15-16) when he says that the interpretation of most graffiti is quite difficult because it depends on a great deal of specific knowledge about the immediate physical location, political issues of the time, special vocabulary, and much else, each person interpreting a particular graffiti in terms of experience may incorrectly assume that a given graffiti means the same thing to everybody. In fact, people are often misled into believing that the shared use of language denotes shared wealth of experience, as earlier observed in 1.0. On the accomplishment of this study, it is hoped that scholars and the public at large would have been informed about the effects loaded in this form of communication, and would also have been well armed with the linguistic repertoire with which to disambiguate these propositions.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Linguists are interested in graffiti today because now, more than ever, they are becoming a universal phenomenon. A great deal has been written on them but none to the researcher's knowledge has attempted to investigate the phenomenon in relation to pragmatics and semiotics, or account for their effect on the target audience. Jimoh (1983), Hentschel (1987), Obeng (2000), Ibileye (2002) all attempt to describe graffiti in the light of their social roles and discourse structures. Students in Kaduna Polytechnic can be said to constitute a specific age group, i.e mostly adolescents to young adults. Attempt to account for language use among this group cannot be unitary but would also involve a pragma -semiotic analysis to unveil their communicative intentions and underlying effects.

Yule 1997:127), opines that "when we read or hear pieces of language, we normally try to understand not only what the words mean but what the writer or speaker of those words intended to convey" Pictures and drawings inclusive as they are communicative events found in students' graffiti. Each graffiti conveys a uniquely different message embedded with underlining meanings even though they are anonymously written.

A few works which exist on graffiti have tended to confirm the general notions regarding them. Some of these notions include the fact that graffiti is regarded as unserious venture used for relaxation as argued by Jimoh, 1983: 123. He believes that graffiti provides, for students especially, no more than a created diversion, a comic relief to lesson the rigors of academic work. They contain no serous themes, he claims, or serous, themes (are) handled in a ridiculously lighthearted way.

However, much more fundamental questions like the following have to be answered.

a) What is unique about students' graffiti and how is this uniqueness pragma-semiotically explicated?
b) How is the language of graffiti different from language use in normal situations?
c) What signs and sign-types are evoked and what do they communicate?
d) To what extent students' graffiti influence the reader / audience?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at a pragma-semiotic analysis of the graffiti found on the walls of toilets, classrooms and hostels in Kaduna Polytechnic, Specifically the study seeks to:

a) elicit the uniqueness of students' graffiti pragma – semiotically;

b) examine the extent of language use in students' graffiti;

c) explicate signs and sign types evoked and their underlying meanings;

d) expound on the influence students' graffiti has on the readers/ audience.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Writing on the wall is a popular activity by students. Though, largely anonymous, the writers (graffitists) represent the average language user. Therefore, there is need for a study of this nature as it throws more light on the communicative form of students language behaviour in tertiary institutions.

A study of graffiti would not only enhance understanding of students language behaviour but would also familiarize the readers / audience with students' communicative act and creative skills.

A frequent study of the language employed in students' graffiti can also be found to answer many of the problems of students unrest in Nigeria. Therefore, there is need for a study of this nature as it will throw more light on the graffiti which is/are embedded with underlying meanings.

Consequently, the study hopes to show the relevance of pragmatics and semiotics in illuminating any written sign / text.

1.7 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study covers the period between the beginning of this research to the end. This is not to pretend that students graffiti had not been in existence earlier but because the walls of students classrooms, toilets and hostels are periodically painted thereby, erasing earlier writings on the walls.

The study is limited to the analysis of students graffiti found in specific places (classrooms, toilets and hostels) within the five campuses of Kaduna Polytechnic: CASSS, CMBS, COE, CST and CES, with their accompanying “Pragma-semiotic” devices, elements and imports. The graffiti considered are the ones that make sense and categorized into various themes. It is to these various varieties that the present study limits itself because certain graffiti, as those that constitute the data and their extra-linguistic / semiotic features “tell a story at a glance” (Wainwrigth, 1982:101).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first part deals with literature from topical perspective, the second part is an overview of literature on pragmatics and semiotics, while the third part deals with various approaches that could serve as the theoretical framework to this study.

2.1 TOPICAL REVIEW

Graffiti, according to the *Collins Cobuild .English Language Dictionary* (1987), refers to words or pictures that are written or drawn on walls, signs, posters and so on in public places, simply put, graffiti is writing on the walls. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1978:375), graffiti:

> To a lexicographer, is the plural of graffito; to a philologist it is an Italian borrowing that means "scribbling" or "scratching"; to the timid, it is something shocking, and to the insolent a chance to shock; to the radical it is "mass propaganda"; to the city of Philadelphia it is a million dollars a year spent in a losing battle to scrape paint off the walls .of its subway platforms; to most of us it is what we see, and perhaps what we scrawl, on the walls of public places, such as toilets.

Originally, the term referred to ancient drawings or writings which were scratched on walls or other surfaces. Graffiti, coined from an

Italian word was used by archeologists to name the ancient drawing or writing found on the walls of Rome.

In a way, the first graffiti was written by God. According to the Bible, which records one of the earliest cases of writings appearing on the wall. God first announced the doom of the reign of King Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchandnezzar who ruled Babylonian around 560BC, in a graffiti. The book of Daniel Chapter 5:5 says:

> In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candle stick upon the plaster of the wall of the kings palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

In the same chapter, verse 25 continues:

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE MENE, TEKEL PARSIN"

Meaning God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. It is however, arguable that the practice of writing on the wall started from this.

It is however, not surprising that few people know it now, but it is perhaps significant to note that the word ‘graffiti’ originally existed in its singular form 'graffito". It is one of those words that the English language in its voracious acquisition of other languages appropriated

from Italian. It is now quite usual to find the Italian word used with a singular verb in English language.

Graffiti, which in Italian means "a scratch" was used mainly in the context of antiquarianism and art history to describe a method of decoration by incising, as well as writing or drawing on a wall, of which perhaps the best known are the scribbling found in Pompeii and Rome.

Gelb (1963:264) contends that in 1856, a caricature of Christ on the cross was found on the walls of the Domus Gelotiana on the Palatine Hill. Also, one of the earliest records of the modern use of the term is found in 1877, when a traveler up the Nile mentions monuments which had been visited by crowds of early travelers who had, as usual left their neatly-scribbled graffiti on the walls.

The history of graffiti can be attributed to experimentation in form and content of the English language. Graffiti emerged from the creativity of the human consciousness and the possibilities to tinker with the form of language. Essentially, graffiti is a compressed form of communication.

Modern graffiti has taken new perspectives and different dimensions. Of foremost importance, graffiti is a writing or drawing scribbled

anywhere especially on an object. Now, graffiti can be observed on cars, in bathrooms, classrooms, cafeterias, toilets and so on unlike, what was obtainable in the past. However, most graffiti is found in concealed areas.

Modern graffiti conveys ideas that are meant to ridicule or critique a person or an idea. Within bathrooms in school graffiti takes the dialogue form. On blackboards, graffiti is mostly students' protest or anger focused at somebody or issues. Graffiti serves as an outlet of showing these feelings. Modern graffiti to some extent has a cultic tendency. It breeds juvenile delinquency.

The language of graffiti is sometimes cynical, witty, sarcastic, crude, humorous and simplistic. Graffiti to some extent has been tagged an offensive language because of its nonsensical and ridiculous outlook. This has been known to have led to certain consequences on the users of graffiti as was the case with the final year students of a certain college in Nigeria who lost their graduation ceremony for indulging in the art of graffiti.

To argue that graffiti being an expression that is a product of juvenile delinquency, is not out of place. Graffiti has a contemporary relevance to the new generation because they are the people who

are in constant use of graffiti. It can be comfortably argued that graffiti is not a new age language but a language that has existed from time immemorial.

However, it is important to note that graffiti is based on the individual's mood and psychological dispensation. For example:

- No Moradona, no peace
- Maradona's death is ABU's death (Ibileye, 2002:106).

Both graffiti indicate students dissatisfaction with the university administration headed by the Vice Chancellor. Subsequently, the students call for the release of Maradona the students' union leader.

It is pertinent to note that the language used in discussing politics is different from that used in discussing sports or domestic issues. The use of language which varies according to theme or occupation in linguistic is referred to as register.

The choice of language or words used in most graffiti varies according to the issue being discussed. For instance, if a graffitist focus is on politics, it will employ the use of words which have political undertone. The graffitist will not use words which are considered unsuitable. If the graffitist chooses the language of engineering

instead of the language of politics, one would not be able to decode his message; in other words he has failed in .communicating.

Students engage in writing on the walls and other surfaces in ink or chalk, or paint, or scratch with sharp instruments. According to Jimoh (1983:114):

> The themes (or subjects) of these graffiti range from mild criticism of their teachers (such as by mimicking them or giving them nicknames and writing these on the chalk board during their evening prep hours), to mere rehearsals of some of the formulae and theorems they had learnt.

Some inscriptions have obvious sexual connotations usually found in students' hostels. Yet others are simply an appeal to fellow students not to clean their anus on the walls or doors of the pit latrines.

Jimoh (1983:115) again aptly puts it thus:

> All the teachers frowned at this aspect of school pupils' behaviours which were generally seen as signs of sexual or moral depravity or of general indiscipline on the part of our secondary school pupils. The chalkboard was regarded as the teachers' exclusive territory on which no students might tread except with the expressed permission of a teacher.

Similarly, writing or drawing on the walls is regarded as a dirty, antisocial habit especially such symbols that have sexual undertones. As a result, almost all types of graffiti by school pupils

are regarded as breach of the regulations for which students are punished, and where individual "authors" are not identified, the whole classes or groups are made to wash or scrub specific surfaces thus affected.

With this as the background, writings on the wall are generally time bound. They are practical realities of the past and the present informed by politics, social existence and religious beliefs of the students. They also express the identity of the writer. According to Crystal (1997:13)

> our use of language can tell our listener or reader a great deal about ourselves in particular about our regional origins, social background, level of education, occupation, age, sex and personality….

The few works that exist on graffiti have tended to confirm the general notions regarding them. Some of these notions include the fact that graffiti is regarded as an unserious venture used for relaxation as argued by Jimoh (1983:123). He believes that graffiti provides, for students especially, no more than a created diversion, a comic relief to lessen the rigours of academic work. They contain no serious themes, he claims, or serious themes (are) handled in a ridiculously lighthearted way.

Rees, (1980:7) on his part believes that graffiti signals helplessness on the part of the writers since “what often generates it is an element of protest or frustration at official business… But behind it there is an often good-natured acceptance of the fact that one cannot change anything and that writing on a wall is the only way left to vent one’s feelings”. He further asserts that: “My definition of graffiti is that it is the individual expression of an idea, done upon, a wall, and above all, done anonymously” (1981:11).

Gari (1993), argues, that graffiti occupies the territory between alphabet and drawing; between the expressive necessity of human beings and their critical impulse, between written and oral language.

However, Blume (1985:42) calls graffiti a "defective communication" because it is believed that it exhibits virtually all features of speech even though it is not a spoken form of language.

However, Hentschel (1987:304), sees a much more motive when she claims that graffiti represents ‘a cry for help' when it pertains to women's graffiti. ‘The writing of graffiti... might be an outlet for the otherwise frustrated wish to communicate constructively; it is a means of communication without any possibility of being interrupted or rejected otherwise' [1987:302). This position is further strengthened

by Jaworski's (1992:27-28) claims that when a group, 'such as women, feels threatened by 'a stronger force... the solution was... simply and effectively to make use of the medium of graffiti to communicate brief messages to many people at once'.

Graffiti is often generated without any prompting or urgent need to achieve an aim, they are not as 'unserious' as they appear, neither are they just outlets for otherwise repressed feelings, opinions and thoughts, nor are they merely a cry for help either by women or anyone. It is held that graffiti serve higher functions which are pragmatic related. These functions range from informing the reader, affecting his/her opinions, orienting him/her morally and warning him/her against political danger.

2.2 PRAGMATICS AND SEMIOTICS: AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.2.1 ISSUES ON PRAGMATICS

The word "pragmatics" derives from the Greek word "pragma" which means "deed" or "action". The term pragmatics, according to Taylor (1998:514), was first used by Morris (1938) who describes it as one of the three (with syntax and semantics) component fields of semiotics, the study of sign and sign systems. Based on the writings of Morris

and Peirce in the late 1930's and early 1940's, pragmatics is seen as the relations of "signs" to "interpreters" and to "users".

According to *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1993:7), pragmatics is “the science of relationship between symbols, their interpretation and users". The term is conceived as the sub-field of language study that investigates the techniques by which language is used to achieve particular communication ends based on the knowledge of the users *Encyclopedia Americana* Vol. 22 (1998:514). While Leech (1983:6) sees pragmatics as "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations", Wales (1989:368) considers it basically as the "study of language use".

Yule (1996:3) opines that pragmatics can be defined from four perspectives. He asserts that:

- Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning
- Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning
- Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said; and Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance.

Based on the definition above, Adegbija (1999:189) maintains that pragmatics takes cognizance of the message being communicated

and the speech act being performed; the participants involved; their interpretation, knowledge of the world and the impacts of these on their interaction; what they have taken for granted as part of the context (or the presuppositions); the deductions they make on the basis of the context; what is implied by what is said or left unsaid; the impacts of the non-verbal aspects of interaction on meaning, etc. This study, in an attempt to examine issues on pragmatics, discovers in Mey (2001:4) that:

> In a modern, communication-oriented terminology, we prefer to talk about 'messages" and 'language users'; in contrast to traditional linguistics, which first and foremost concentrates on the elements and structures (such as sounds and sentences) that the language users produce.

He sees pragmatics as focusing on the language - using humans. This means that pragmatics is interested in the process of producing language and in its 'producers', not just in the end-product', language. Concerned about pragmatics Mey (2001:12) asks the question;

> What does pragmatics have to offer that cannot be found in good old-fashioned linguistics? What do pragmatics methods give in the way of greater understanding of how the human mind works, how humans communicate, how they manipulate one another, and in general, how they use language?

He goes on to say that 'pragmatics is needed if we want a fuller, deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language behaviour

In their own contribution to the pragmatic theories, Helen Spencer-Oatey and Vladimir Zegarac (2002:74) say that pragmatics explores questions such as the following:

- How do people communicate more than what the words or phrases of their utterances might mean by themselves, and how do people make these interpretations?
- Why do people choose to say and/or interpret something in one way rather than another?
- How do people's perception of contextual factors (for example, who the interlocutors are, what their relationships is, and what circumstances they-are communicating in) influence the process of producing and interpreting language.

They recognize that "human communication largely exploits a code (a natural language such as English), but they also try to do justice to the fact that human communicative behaviour relies heavily on people's capacity to engage in reasoning about other's intentions, exploiting not only the evidence presented by the signals in the

language code but also evidence from other sources, including perception and general world knowledge".

“Moreover, the pragmatic theories are concerned with the mental structure underlying the ability to interpret utterances in context” (Blackmore, 1982:18). They are meant to explain how context is used in the interpretation of an utterance. “The theories evolve out of the limitation of structural semantics to capture the sociological and other non-linguistic dimensions of verbal communication” (Ayodabo, 1997:134). Of importance are the pragmatic theories of Austin (1962), Grice (1975), Searle (1969, 1979), Bach and Harnish (1979) and Adegbija (1982) even though a few other theories exist.

The speech act theory as propounded by Austin (1962) has former and latter components for the purpose of this study, the latter version of this theory is adopted because it is more elaborate. This latter version effectively deconstructs the original distinction drawn between constative and performatives. He says that engaging in a performative utterance is performing the complimentary act of locution (an act OF saying something), illocution (an act IN saying something) and perlocution (thoughts and feelings produced BY saying something).

Austin (1962) further proposes five “general preliminary classifications” of illocutionary acts as follows.

a) Verdictives: Typified by the giving of a verdict, estimate, reckoning or an appraisal, giving and finding.
b) Excersitives: The excercising of powers, rights or influence, exemplified by voting, ordering, urging, advising etc.
c) Commisives: This is typified by promising or otherwise undertakings, which are not promises.
d) Behavitives: which have to do with social behaviour and attitudes for example; apologizing, congratulating, commending, challenging, etc.
e) Expositives: which make clear how our utterances fit into the course of an arguments or conversion, how we are employing words. (Lecture 12).

Searle (1969), following Austin, comes up with five classes of illocution as Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declarations, mainly. He later emphasizes the need of putting the intentional and conventional aspects of meaning into consideration in the overall analysis or study of illocutionary acts. “Searle (1979) revises Grice's notion of meaning that if a speaker means something by X, the speaker intends that utterance of X to produce some effect

in a hearer by means of the latter's recognition of this intention" (Adegbija, 1999:201).

Grice's (1975) contribution essentially rests on the "cooperative principle", a quasi-interactional agreement which speakers enter into in speech- situations. "He proposes four maxims, the underlining import of which is: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs; by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk in which you are engaged" (Yule, 1996:37). In other words, the maxims are those of quantity (make your contribution as informative as is required), quality (be truthful), relation (be relevant) and manner (be clear). When any of the maxims is flouted, there is a conversational implicature (an additional unspoken meaning conveyed beyond what the words mean).

Bach and Harnish (1979) contribute their "Intention and reference" approach to speech-acts. They argue that illocutionary acts are performed with the intention that the hearer identifies the very act being performed. They contend that the reference made by the hearer is not just based on what the speaker says but also on mutual contextual beliefs (MCB'), They recognize two categories of illocutionary acts: communicative (which has the four main categories of constatives, directives, commissives and acknowledgements) and

non-communicative (with two sub-categories of effectives and verdictives).

Adegbija's (1982) major contribution is his observation that earlier speech act theorists relegate the context of social interaction to the background. He contends that at every stage of discourse, both speaker and hearer have to deploy the relevant aspects of the pragmatic, social, syntactic, semantic and lexical competencies in order to be able to participate effectively in the interaction at hand (Ayodabo, 1997:135). Adegbija proposes "pragma-sociolinguistic context" to describe the situation of social interaction.

Other pragmatists who have contributed to the theories of pragmatics include Saddock (1974), Leech (1983), Allan (1986), Lawal (1995) and Yule (1996). There are studies, e.g. Ibileye (1994), Frank (1980), Bahago (1998).

The principal goals of pragmatic theories, according to Adegbija (1999:1988), are to explain how utterances convey meaning in context: how meaning is decoded-from utterances in contexts and in particular situations; how contexts contribute to the encoding and decoding of meaning; how speakers and hearers of utterances perceive them; how speakers can say one thing and mean something else; and how deductions are made in context with respect to what

meaning has been encoded in a particular utterance. In other words, as Lawal (1997a:152) proposes, pragmatic theories must revolve around speech-act functions, along with presuppositions, implicatures and other mutual contextual beliefs (MCB's).

2.2.2 ISSUES ON SEMIOTICS

Semiotics, also referred to as semiology, originates from a Greek word "semeion" which means "sign". Thus, according to the popular definition, semiotics is the science of signs (Adedimeji, 2002a:2). It is concerned with everything that can be "taken" as a sign (Eco, 1976:7). The subject seeks to account for "any system of signs whatever their substance" (Barthes, cited in Oloruntoba-Oju 1999). In other words, as Hiz (1977:41) advances, semiotics "deals with meaning conveyed by any medium".

The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language Vol. 2 (1987) defines semiotics as a:

> Study of patterned human communication behaviour, including auditory/vocal and facial expression, body talk (kinestics), touch (proxemics), signs, symbols (semiology).

Thus, semiotics is the theory of science and analysis of signs and sign systems and their meanings specifically those concerned with communication between human beings in different societies and

cultures (Wales, 1989:416) as it overlaps with ether disciplines such as Communication Theory, -Sociolinguistics and Semantics.

The subject of semiotics owes a great deal to the pioneering works of the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) as well as to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 1913) the Swiss linguist. It investigates the structure of all possible sign systems and the role they play in the understanding and perception of patterns or meanings in socio-cultural behaviour. It is an all-inclusive subject, dealing with patterned human communication in all its modes and ramifications (sound, sight, touch, smell and taste) and all contexts (e,g dance, film, politics, media, eating, clothing, etc). As an integrated science attempting to elaborate the signification process in a given system, Oloruntoba-Oju, (1999:156) asserts that semiotics assimilates various insights from varying disciplines that are concerned with the problem of communication.

The main goal of semiotics is the investigation of signification patterns and structure in texts, identifying and analyzing them. This goal is aptly captured by Jakobson (1971:698) that:

> Every message is made up of signs; correspondingly, the science of signs termed semiotics deals with those general principles which underlie the structure of all signs, whatever, and with the character of their

> utilization within message as well as with the specifics of the various sign systems and of the diverse messages using those different kinds of signs.

In essence, the goals/objectives of semiotics are the segmentation of signification, which is the methodical analysis and description of how a particular phenomenon communicates, the interpretation of signs vis-à-vis their semantic implications and the examination of structures with which communication takes place.

“The distinctiveness of the semiotic model lies in its eclectic range and its focus on patterns rather than on discrete elements of signification” (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1999:170). The insights that semiotics assimilates from various related disciplines have made its principles applicable to all aspects of human endeavour. It has been successfully applied by scholars to folktales, myth and mythology, dramatic literature, narration, advertisement and satire (See Qloruntoba-Oju, 1999:170). It has equally been applied to the analysis of comic discourse (Are, 1990), fiction (Anozie, 1981, Alabi, 1995) and driving (Lawuyi, 1993, Alabi, 1996; Odebunmi, 2000 and Adedimeji, 2002a).

2.2.3 THE PRAGMA-SEMIOTIC MODEL APPROACH

The theoretical framework of analysis adopted for this present study is derived from a combination of pragmatics and semiotic making it

eclectic in form. Given the fact that there is a natural relationship between pragmatics and semiotics, it follows that an integration of the two to graffiti analysis will be fruitful. Though often -considered a separate and discrete field of study in many scholarly works, pragmatics originally is one of the component fields of semiotics, While “semiotics is concerned with the underlying and signifying structure of all symbolic systems” (Lawal, 1997b:18), it subsumes pragmatics, “the study of symbols in their relation to the speakers, listeners and social contexts, and syntax, the study of the interrelation of symbols and semantics, the study of their (symbols) relation to that which is symbolized” (Mautner, 1996:334).

The pragma-semiotic theory therefore investigates the totality of the signification systems, linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (pictorial, colour, etc) in the communicative process and the concomitant effects of these signs on the participants, immediate or remote, in a given context. It is upheld that all elements of communication in a text operate inter-dependently to give messages that provoke attitudes and reactions. There is a fluidity of pragmatics in semiotics and the effect of this is the prompt interpretation of symbols and reaction to the systems of signs.

Moreover, the pragma-semiotics of graffiti, proposed in this research operates at three discrete levels/stages of communication. These are the physical, the psychical/psychological and the practical. The physical stage comprises ail signifying patterns, texts (words), colours, pictures, graphological patterns etc, that make up the system. At the psychical/psychological level, the combination of the physical elements, with the deployment of appropriate linguistic competencies instills feelings of joy, pain, threat, anxiety, terror, embarrassment, frustration, etc, in the hearts of the decoder or the target. At the practical stage, the decoder or the target of the pragma semiotic graffiti functions or reacts by acknowledging, banning, intimidating, terrorizing, implicating or frustrating the source/encoder and possibly capitulating to the mounted pressure.

This trichotomy, which we may also call action interpretation reaction chain, is verified and justified first by St Augustine, cited in Clark (1987:20) and quoted by Alabi (1991:99) that, “there is no reason for signifying, that is, for giving signs, except for bringing forth and transferring to another mind what is conceived in the mind of the person who gives the signs”.

And second, by Taylor (1998:515), who defines pragmatics as:

> The study of the relationship between the linguistic meaning (or 'sense') of the sentence

> and the FORCE (emphasis mine, meaning effect or perlocutionary intention) that the sentence acquires when used in a particular exchange.

It is quite possible for a graffitist to intend something by his utterance / sign that in literal sense is not obvious. All the participants can only infer the intention. This makes pragma semiotic theory relevant to the analysis of graffiti. The metalangauge of pragma-semiotic are therefore, employed because we feel they can conveniently be used to explicate our discussion and analysis in order to answer the research question.

2.2.4 THE METALANGUAGE OF PRAGMA-SEMIOTICS

A metalanguage is conceived to be that language which gives or presents or assigns terms for the analysis of an object language. It is, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. LX (1989), a formal language system describing language or a linguistic source. Put differently, it is a sign-system developed to talk about another sign system as content, or a higher level language to talk about another language (object-language) (Wales, 1989:294). It is the set of jargons facilitating talking about concepts easily, creating words out of the existing elements in the language and/or extending the senses of ordinary words.

The metalanguage of pragma-semiotics is thus the elements of its description and analysis. These elements are loaned and extended from the pot-pourri of concepts underpinning pragmatics, semantics and semiotics. This metalanguage, for the purpose of this study, is made up of a dozen interlocking triads viz; sign, signifier and signified; context, system and world knowledge; intention, message and participants; denotation, connotation and master speech-acts; sense, reference and inference; symbols, indices and icons; encoding, code, decoding; text, co-text and inter-text; locution, illocution and perlocution; colour, picture and image; presupposition, entailment and implicature, and the pairs of constative / performative acts, direct/indirect speech acts and face-saving/face-threatening acts. Each set of these triads is discussed in sequence thus:

A. SIGN, SIGNIFIER AND SIGNIFIED

"Sign" originates from the Latin "signum" which means "mark, token". As the focus of study in semiotics, it refers to "something" which stands for, or refers to, something in a meaningful way (Wales, 1989:419). De Saussure regards language mainly as a "deposit of signs", viewing sign as a phenomenon consisting of an "acoustic image". This assumption informed the triangular relationship involving the activation of signs, proposed by Peirce:

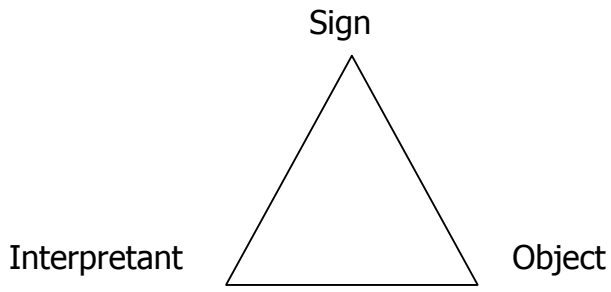


Fig. 4: Peirce Elements of ‘Semeiois’

The object is that described by the sign, but the sign only signifies - has meaning - in the process of it becoming a mental concept (interpretant) or what de Saussure named the signified.

Peirce considers sign as "something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity" (Cited in Alabi, 1995:19) and it is basic that, according to Eco (1976:65), "semiotics is mainly concerned with signs as social forces". In essence, the point of emphasis in pragma-semiotics is that “the sign depends for its meaning on the context in which it is communicated" (Watson and Hill, 1993:173).

Signifier is any form to which a meaning can be associated. According to de Saussure, it obtains its meaning from its relationship to other signifiers within the relationship mapped out by language (Alabi, 1995:15). It is semantically autonomous, an equivalent of the Peircean 'object'

Signified is the idea or concept evoked by the signifier (Qloruntoba-Qju 1999:162). It is the counterpart of signifier; the relationship between the two and the physical existence of the sign as well as the mental concept it represents becomes "signification" which for de Saussure, is the manifestation of external reality or meaning. Meanwhile, there is no inherent or natural relationship between the signifier and the signified, rather, the relationship is that of arbitrariness.

B. CONTEXT, SYSTEM AND WORLD KNOWLEDGE

Contest is simply a place in which a communicative event occurs (Crystal, 1987:48) or a term used to provide links between linguistic items and the social and situational factors of communication (Adegbite, 2000:64). To Lyons (1977:572), context is:

... a theoretical construct in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language event, systematically determine the form and, the appropriateness of the meaning of utterances.

There are four types of context, which are the physical, the socio-cultural, the linguistic and the psychological (Adegbija, 1999:191), The physical context is the location or setting in which an utterance

takes place, a room, a town, a market, etc. the socio-cultural context, moreover, is concerned with the cultures, values, customs, habits and beliefs of the participants in discourse, and how these interact with the communicative process. While the linguistic context concerns the words that occur in the verbal environment of an utterance (i.e co-texts); the psychological context is the state of mind of the participants in a discourse event. All these are crucial in the inferential process of adducing to, or deducing from the meanings of utterances.

System, the object of semiotic enquiry, is a configuration of interacting elements (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1999:159). It is an organized set of competing possibilities among the grammatical or lexical elements of a language, often considered together with a set of statements for choosing among these possibilities (Trask, 1993:274). A system is always constituted by a whole and its parts or sub-systems. A sub-system, thus, is a small group of elements existing within a larger group. For instance, a cover page of a magazine constitutes a system in which the subsystems of the masthead, words (headline), pictures, etc operate.

World knowledge, as the term denotes, is based on the fact that participants in a communicative environment interact efficiently because they share some knowledge of the world which they do not

normally repeat in their communication. Since a speech-act is performed with the aim that the listener/reader will be able to understand and identify the intention of the speaker based on his knowledge, aspects of this knowledge are branded by Bach and Harnish (1979:5) as "mutual conceptual beliefs (MCBs)". World knowledge “is thus impinged on presupposition” (Lawal, 1997a:153, Adegbite, 2000:69).

C. INTENTION, MESSAGE AND PARTICIPANTS

Intention is the psychological process behind anything that is said. It is what the speaker has in mind as a plan or purpose of an utterance. The notion of intention is central to the theory of Bach and Harnish (1979). They content that the contextual beliefs that figure in speaker’s intentions and hearer's inferences must be mutual if communication is to take place (Bach and Harnish, 1979:5). In other words, an act is only communicatively successful as soon as the speaker's illocutionary intention is recognized by the hearer (Adegbija 1982:25). There is the illocutionary intention (what we want to achieve, i,e informing, challenging, by an utterance) and there is perlocutionary intention (the effect we want the text or the utterance to achieve, i.e quitting an office, fulfilling a promise).

Message is that which an act of communication is about. According to Wales (1989:291), it is a place of information encoded by a speaker/writer or addresser into a linguistic form or code, transmitted via the medium of speech or writing along a channel that decodes it. Watson and Hill (1993:116) affirm that a message can only be meaningfully examined in the context of other elements all of which are interlinked and interactive.

Participants are those who take part in any particular activity, action or system *(Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, 1987:1045). Anybody that is involved directly or indirectly in the communicative or interactional context is a participant. Participants, who may be immediate or remote, contribute to the essence of the discourse at hand. Factors such as age, sex, status, hierarchy, attitude and knowledge of the context affect the participants and influence the interpretation of their utterances.

D. DENOTATION, CONNOTATION AND MASTER SPEECH ACT

Denotation, a term used in Semantics as part of classification of types of meaning (Wales, 1989:74), is applicable to the sense of an utterance. The denotation of a word may be regarded as the plain meaning of a word in its context; it is the literal and central meaning of a word in its context; it is the literal and central meaning of a word

(Ogunsiji, 2000:51). Denotative meaning is the cognitive, conceptual, basic or logical meaning, the surface side which a word or expression turns to a hearer or reader, the meaning of which is descriptive and often objective in nature (Odebunmi, 2001:48). Denotation is considered as the primary layer of meaning.

Connotation is commonly used to refer to all kinds of associations words may evoke, whether emotional, situational, etc, particularly in certain contexts over and above denotation (Crystal, 1991:89). If denotative meaning is regarded as the central meaning of a word, connotative meaning will be the peripheral meaning of a word, the individual meanings we have about words (Ogunseiji, 2000:51). In essence, connotative meaning, which derives from the basic meaning of a word, depends strictly on context and varies by history, culture or individual experience (Odebunmi, 2001:49). It is the secondary layer of meaning.

Master Speech Act is used to refer to that layer of meaning that transcends but subsumes the connotative meaning. It is a term corned by Adegbija in 1985 (See-Ajileye and Ajileye, 1997:196) which is meant to handle meaning at a deeper level based on his "pragma sociolinguistic context" of achieving or deducing meaning (Adegbija, 1982:41). This meaning is based on the cognitive or affective states

of the participants, special relationships obtaining among them and the mutual beliefs and understanding (or lack of them) amongst the participants. In the Master Speech Act or Global/Tertiary layer of meaning, the full cognizance of the pragmatic, social and linguistic contexts of language use are taken into consideration. Thus, factors such as the historical, environmental, natural, social and linguistic backgrounds are salient to the understanding and encoding of meaning (Ajileye and Ajileye, 1997:197). These three levels of meaning are interactive and interdependent.

E. SENSE, REFERENCE AND INFERENCE

Sense relates to the complex system of relationships that holds between the linguistic elements themselves (mostly the words); it is concerned only with intra-linguistic relations (Palmer, 1981:29); it is concerned only with infra-linguistic relations (Palmer, 1981:29). It is the cognitive description of an utterance, concerned with the internal aspects of language, where meaning takes place at the denotative level. The sense of an expression may be defined as the set or network of sense relations that hold between it and other expressions of the same language.

Reference refers to the relationship that holds between an expression and what that expression stands for on a particular occasion of its

utterance (Lyons 1977:174). In other words, reference, according to Palmer (1981:29), deals with the relationship between the linguistic elements, words, sentences, etc, and the non-linguistic worlds of experience. It is concerned with the association of a particular expression with the outside world of cognition and experience.

Inference is the listener's use of additional knowledge to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance (Yule, 1996:131). It is the deductive process through which meaning is extracted from a text or discourse. The notion of inference is central to Bach and Harnish's (1979) theory, whose chief merit is their provision of an elaborate, comprehensive, step-by-step analysis of the process a hearer goes through in trying to Identify an illocutionary act (Adegbija, 1982:30). For Bach and Harnish (1979:18), the inferential procedure is applied as the hearer or reader "often works holistically, both looking ahead and back-tracking as he goes along".

F. SYMBOLS, INDICES AND ICONS

Symbol is the “sign proper” (Abrams, 1988:245), in which the relation between the signifying item and what it signifies is a matter of social convention, not a natural one (Lawal, 1997b:16). The symbol may have no resemblance whatever to the object or idea it stands for. Arbitrary, existing by convention, rule or assent, symbol means

"something beyond itself" (Watson and Hill, 1993:291). Symbols are almost always culture bound. A word, for instance, is a symbol.

Index refers to "a sign of the existence or occurrence of some singularity external to the sign" (Alabi, 1995:23). "Indices bear causal relations to what they signify" (Lawal, 1997:16). For example, smoke is an index of fire, symptoms are indices of diseases.

Icon is a resemblance of a representation of the object – "a photograph or a map would constitute an iconic sign" (Watson and Hill, 1993:173). According to Peirce, an icon is a sign which refers to the object it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses. "Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it" (Alabi 1995:23).

G. ENCODING, CODE AND DECODING

Encoding is a term in semiotics from the communication theory used to refer to "the process whereby an addresser or transmitter converts a message to a text by a set of rules or codes, to be received or decoded by an addressee" (Wales, 1989:144). It is "the process or act representing our world and feelings through the use of signs or any language system".

Code can be defined “as a signifying system” (Medubi, 1994:134). It is a system into which signs are organized, governed by consent” Watson and Hill, 1993:133). And, for the fact that all aspects of human behaviour function as signs, there are codes of all kinds in the society, with differing degrees of complexity of structure and information (Wales, 1989:71).

“Decoding is the art by which meaning is made of an utterance or act by the listener” (Medubi, 1994:139). It refers to the interpretation of messages (spoken, written or visual) by the receiver or addressee which have been formed or encoded as text by the transmitter or addresser according to the set of rules or code (language).

H. CO-TEXT AND INTER-TEXT

Text, which originates from the Latin verb, "textere" meaning “weave" suggests a sequence of words or utterances “interwoven” structurally and semantically. It is, according to O’ Sullivian et. al (cited in Watson and Hill, 1993:193), a "signifying structure composed of signs and codes which is essential to communication".

Text refers to a message that has a physical existence of its own, independent of its sender and receiver and thus composed of representational codes. “Text, meaning any permanent set of ordered

elements of which its co-presence is considered by an encoder and decoder as being related to one another through the mediation of a logico-semantic system; convention, rules, codes" (Bouilsac, cited in Oloruntoba-Oju, 1999:166), "constitutes the focal point of semiotics". "The central concern of pragma-semiotics is to discover ways in which a given text can generate a range of meanings" (cf. Watson and Hill, 1993:193).

Co-text describes the verbal or linguistic context as distinct from situational context. "It is the co-text of an item that helps to determine its form and meaning (Wales, 1989:100). In other words, "co-text is a definite text with which another interacts to produce a given set of configuration" (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1999:100).

Inter-text signals the multidimensional of texts through their relationship and the way they interconnect, interweave and interact upon one another. "The power of intertextuality is to blur the boundaries between individual texts" (Watson and ill, 1993). In essence, "intertext is basically utterances, signs or texts in relation to other utterances, signs or texts" (Wales, 1989:259).

I. LOCUTION, ILLOCUTION AND PERLOCUTION

These are the constituents of the speech act theory of Austin (1962) concerned with linguistic acts made while speaking. A locutionary act

is the physical act of uttering the words (Wales, 1989:282). According to Austin (1962:94), the act of saying something is the performance of a “locutionary act”. To perform a locutionary act is, in general, also to perform an illocutionary act", according to Austin (Adegbija, 1982:8).

Illocution or an illocutionary act, which subsumes locutionary act, is "an act in saying something, as opposed to performance of an act of saying something" (Austin, 1962:99-100). It is a conventional act performed in conformity with a convention (Adegbija, 1982:8) and it includes asking or answering a question, giving information or assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict or an intention, pronouncing a sentence, making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism, etc.

Perlocution, or a perlocutionary act, a non-conventional phenomenon unlike illocutionary acts, refers to the effects on, or thoughts or feelings of, the audience, or the speaker produced by the act of saying something (Adegbija, 1982:9; 1999; 199). It is the intended or unintended consequence of, or reaction to, what is said.

Put differently, “it is the effect achieved by the utterance on the addressee” (Wales, 1989:283).

J. COLOUR, PICTURE AND IMAGE

Colour is the appearance that something has as a result of reflecting light, a quality that makes something especially interesting and exciting *(Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, 1987:268), Colour is used as a means of communication. At road junctions, Awoniyi (1982:4) contends, red lights mean stop, green lights mean go. To some people, white means peace, and blue signifies love. It is often conceived that red connotes evil and blood shed while black symbolizes gloom and mourning. Yellow represents the light of the sun or hope while green stands for lush vegetation or productivity. According to Goddard (1998:114), the English language has eleven colours: black, white, red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, pink, brown and grey; none of these is context-specific as all are psychologically salient.

Picture is simply a painting, drawing or photograph *(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1995:1062), Picture may be iconic, as in a map, a single sign of a picture may be made up of three categories (Watson and Hill, 1993:88). It is a representation of a main entity by means of lines or colours such that the entity is known through what looks like it.

Image is a likeness, a representation, a visualization, a visual representation. The image does not merely reproduce, it interprets and adds to the meanings. The purpose of all images is to evoke responses of one kind or another, usually emotional *(Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, 1987). Images subsuming pictures and colours, serve as psychological triggers effecting responses which are not always easy to articulate.

K. PRESUPPOSITION, ENTAILMENT AND IMPLICATURE

Presupposition is something the speaker/encoder assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance (Yule, 1996:25). It is what the speaker assumes that the hearer will see as part of the context in discourse (Odebunmi, 2001:16). Adegbija (1999:190), who identifies semantic and pragmatic presuppositions, contends that presuppositions are what the participants take for granted as part of the "common ground" they share. Semantic presupposition is the logical relations that hold between sentences; a part of sentence meaning. On the other hand, pragmatic presupposition refers to the conditions necessary for a speech act to be appropriate in a particular context. In other words, it is the conditions that the world must meet for an utterance to make literal sense (Adegbija, 1999:190).

Entailment is what logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance (Yule, 1996:25). Entailment is concerned with what is necessarily understood from what is not overtly stated. The notion of hyponymy, a relation of inclusion holding between words, is akin to the concept of entailment To say that a person is a mother entails that she has a family, "this is a bitch" entails that "this is a dog" (Odebunmi, 2001:65).

Implicature is the mid-way between what is said and what is implied but not entailed or stated overtly (Lawal et al, 1997:629). It is what is suggested or meant (in a message) as distinct from what is literally stated. To Adegbija {1999:194), implicature has to be inferred or worked out… depending on the awareness of the speaker and the hearer of the presuppositions of the context of interaction. Implicatures are either conventional (or determined by the general or specific meaning that a word or an utterance means or implies) or conversational (derived from the "cooperative principles" of Grice (1975) viz Quantity (be as informative as is required), Quality (be truthful). Relation (be relevant) and manner (be clear). Conversional implicature arises when any of the four maxims is flouted.

L. CONSTATIVE / PERFORMATIVE ACTS, DIRECT/INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS AND FACE-SAVING / FACE-THREATENING ACTS

Constative and performatives are the two distinctions made by Austin (1962) of the speech – acts. Austin (1962) pointed out that there are a number of utterances that do not report or 'constate' anything and are not therefore 'true or false', but rather that the uttering of the sentence is or is part of, an action. Such utterance Austin described as 'performatives'. "A performative, therefore, is a type of sentence or verb where an action is performed by virtue of the sentence having been uttered" (crystal, 1992: 294). A sentence with 'I' and a 'present tense verb' will be an example of a performative. By extension, it is possible to suggest that in uttering any sentence, a speaker could be seen to have performed some act (illocutionary act). Conventionarilly associated with each illocutionary act is the 'force' of the utterance which can be expressed as a performative such as 'promise' or 'warn'. The illocutionary force of 'get out' is a command. Austin also pointed out that, in uttering a sentence, a speaker performs a 'perlocutionary act' which may be described in terms of the effect which the illocutionary act has on the hearer on the particular occasion of use.

“Constatives make statements, describe situations, observe phenomena and asserts their truth or falsity” (Lawal, 1997a:151), performatives, which perform actions by their production, are either “felicitous” or infelicitous”. “All sentences have an illocutionary force which is often indirectly or implicitly stated” (Wales, 1989:345).

Direct speech acts are utterances that are explicitly expressed. What is meant is clearly stated in direct speech acts. Indirect speech acts, however, are utterances in which we say one thing and mean what we have said, and also mean another illocution with a different prepositional content (Adegbija, 1999:196). Leech and Thomas (1990:191), cite Searle (1979) as seeing indirect speech acts as “cases in which one illocutionary at is performed indirectly, by way of another”. While they assert the speakers use indirectness for politeness (Leech and Thomas, 1990:194), they cite factors such as "clash of goals", "instrumental rationality", wishing "to say and not to say something simultaneously" (by using indirectness, the speaker says one thing and implies another, leaving him/herself an "out" in case of reprisals) and "interestingness" as the motives for indirectness.

Face- saving and face-threatening acts have to do with the concept of face which Siegal (1996:362), citing Goffman defines as the positive

social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face wants, thus, are a person's expectation that his public self-image will be respected (Yule, 1996:130). Drawing from the foregoing, a face-saving act is an utterance or a speech act that improves the self image of the hearer by lessening or removing the possible threat or defiance in the act, perhaps through mitigating devise (i.e "please", "sorry") or hedges. A face-threatening act is an utterance that represents a threat to another person's expectations regarding self-image (Yule, 1996:61). A request, a command, an imposition (without giving options) are face-threatening acts.

Both face saving acts and face threatening acts are central to the theory of politeness phenomenon which has gained scholarly attention in the studies of Brown and Levinson (1974 and 1978). Scarcella and Brunak (1981), Adegbija (1939b) etc, Adebgija (1989b:57) considers politeness as "a pervasive phenomenon in all human communities". He goes further to illustrate how it is "very critically important in communicating in Nigeria". He cites Lakoff (1975) that there are three rules of politeness which are:

a) Formally: keep aloof;

b) Deference: give options (Hesitations, hedges, euphemisms, and Jack of assertiveness are all considered to be applications of these rules);

c) Camaraderie: show sympathy, i.e a speaker should make the addressee felt that the speaker likes him and wants to be friendly with him, is interested in him, etc. (Adegbija, 1989b:58).

A face saving act is thus a form of politeness while a face threatening act is an instance of impoliteness.

The framework of analysis is adopted for the present research is derived from all that has been highlighted from pragmatics and semiotic models and approaches.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Quite a number of models and frameworks have been employed in the analysis and description of language. Generally, the underlining motive behind these analysis is to elicit principles and highlight features through which communication takes place between the encoder and the decoder. Examples of these approaches to language study include the phonological, morphological, stylistic linguistics, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic models.

The existing models of communication like those of Harold Lasswell, Shannon and Weaver, David Berlo, Frank Dance and Dean Barlund (as cited in Olasehinde (1994:4-6) do not serve our purpose because they do not take into account the effects of codes on the decoder as well as the decoder's reactions against the encoder. The models of Lawal (1995 and 1997b) also do not apply much to the present study. This is mainly because they do not account for the effects of communication on the addressee or the reaction of the decoder to the code signaled in the communication process.

For instance, the following models (Figures 1 and 2) of Shannon and Weaver and 'the one way model', based on Aristotle's rhetoric, show the oversimplification of the communication process. And like many other models of communication, they ignore the crucial aspect of reaction.

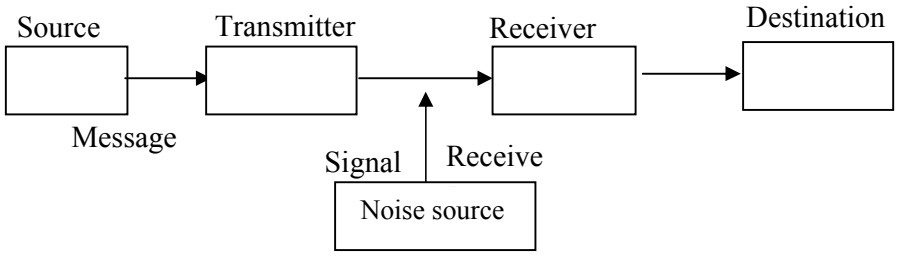


Fig. 1: The Shanon-Weaver Model of Communication

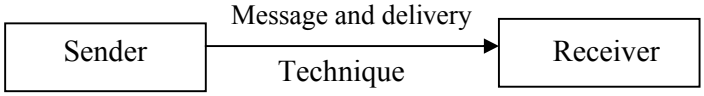


Fig. 2: One Way Model of Communication

It is the contention thus that generally, a communication model must account for the effects of, and reaction to, the messages contained in the communication. The specific communication theory will naturally derive from the tripartite general framework, (i.e. sender-message-receiver/Addresser – Address – Addressee) or the 'stimulus – response' chain. The pragma-semiotic model of communication with reference to the goal of the present study is given and describes as follows:

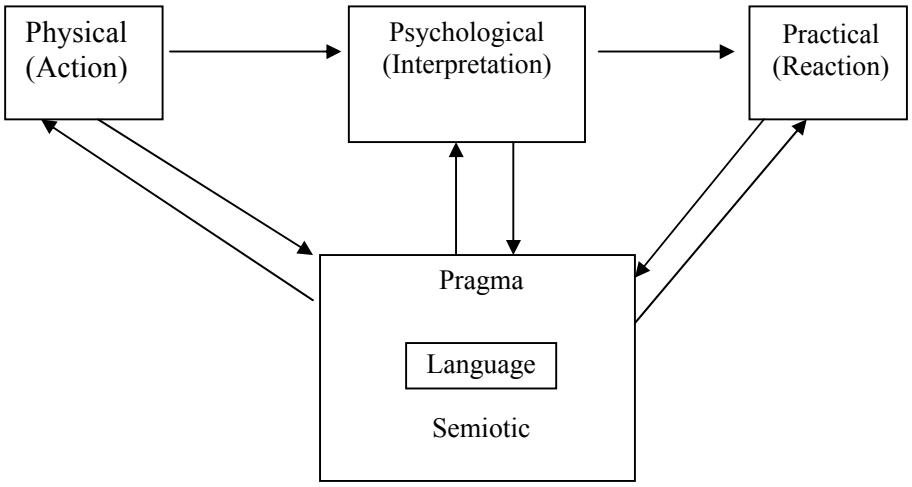


Fig. 3: The Three level Pragma-Semiotic Model (Achi 2010).

The model shows the three levels of communication, the addresser, the address/message and the addressee or the physical, psychological and practical stages respectively. There is a continuum among the three levels as physical actions are taken to generate certain psychological interpretation which results to practical reaction.

For the fact that language is characteristically complex and dynamic, the relationship between one model and the other is not unipolar. Rather, substantial overlaps often resulting to eclectic approaches always exist. This phenomenon has instantiated compounding; the process of blending two (or more) linguistic genres to analyze texts as is adopted in this study. The pragma-semiotic model is thus adopted for the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in this research. It also serves as the background against which the findings and conclusions could be appraised. Afolabi (1993:41) affirms that.

> The methodology is the operational blueprints which the researcher plans to employ in accomplishing the objectives of the study … It deals with 'how' not the "what" or "why" aspect of the research.

The following procedure is adopted to serve as a framework with which to accomplish the task of adequately arriving at the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. Sources of data
2. Method of data collection
3. Analytical procedure

SOURCES OF DATA

This research work is a pragma-semiotic analysis of graffiti of Kaduna Polytechnic students. The sources of the data were basically samples from the walls of classrooms, toilets hostels and the libraries within the institution.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

With the help of two students, a male and a female, graffiti was collected and recorded from the doors and walls of students' toilets, in the lecture blocks, library and hostels. They were collected directly and copied from the walls. The collection had been going on for the over twelve months, although most of the items in this study were collected in 2009.

Being data based, this study adopts the sampling method, which is concerned with taking portion or universe as representative of that popular universe (Osuala, 1987). Favourable items that met the researcher's needs were chosen for analysis. Out of two hundred pieces that were collected, twenty could be properly deciphered and have been selected for analysis.

A good number of the rejected ones were found to be unfit and inappropriate for this study, while yet others were not very clear in their messages. Thus, the quoted figure for analysis have been selected based on their depth and richness of language, interesting, poignant and striking qualities as well as the accessibility of the messages. As for the justification for the adoption of twenty graffiti, Nwana (1981:7071) as cited in Abaya (2001:64-65) asserts that:

> There is no fixed and inviolate rule regarding the size of the sample. No fixed number and no fixed percentage is ideal. Rather, it is the circumstances of the study situation that determine what number or what percentage of the population should be studied.

Sankaff in Wardhaugh 1986:153) is however apt in his remark that a sample for linguistic research does not require a large number of population. “Besides the convenience that goes with fewer samples, geographical circumstance and advantage afforded the opportunity of fair representation of the number adopted”.

The pictures / drawings were even more difficult to classify in this manner. Sometimes, a contributor starts a drawing in blue ink and it appears the same contributor or another one completes the drawing in red ink.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

This research work is the analysis of graffiti. Therefore, analysis and discussion aim at providing answers to the research questions.

In order to answer the research questions convincingly and also account for the aims of the study, an eclectic approach namely, pragma-semiotic model is used to explicate the data. Based on the opinions that “no full blown pragmatic theory that caters for all the goals of pragmatics has been developed” (Adegbija, 1999:198) and

that “semiotic models (alone) tend to be superfluous and unwieldy“ (Oloruntoba Oju, 1999: 167). In other words as pragmatics does not concern itself with pictures/photographs which also perform communicative functions, and semiotics, strictly, does not deal with the consequences / effects of sign, a pragma-semiotic analytical method is adopted using Austin’s (1962) latter version of speech act theory as earlier discussed under 2.2.1 for the description and analysis of data.

This study, therefore presents tables containing the relevant elements from the various pragma-semiotic models, arranged in five columns. The first column presents the graffiti selected for analysis. The second column shows the different acts types involved in the graffiti that have been selected. In the third column, the communicative value of the graffiti is established. By communicative value, we infer to that domain of pragmatics that relates to what the graffiti intends the act or message to mean. Other terms used by linguists may include literal / intended meaning, (Stevenson 1993). The fourth column identifies pictorial accompaniments and then final column presents perlocutionary act, that is the effect of graffiti on the target audience.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data collected, conducts an analysis and discusses the results. The pragma-semiotic model is used for the analysis of the selected graffiti.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

The following samples of graffiti were selected for analysis

GRAFFITI ON SEX AND SEXUAL MATTERS

1) BEWARE! Aids is Real

- *No shaking*

- *Condom dey*

2) BEWARE! Pussy kills

- *It is bc u lost ur penis*

- *U are very ras*

3) MY ROD IS *2* BIG

- *Go fuck ur mother*

GRAFFITI ON POLITICS AND NATIONAL ISSUES

4) Guerrilla WAR in Niger Delta

- *No be small thing o*

5) NO WAY FOR IWU- Nigerians say ENOUGH is ENOUGH

6) Keke Napep – Wuzob?

GRAFFITI ON MORALS OR RELIGION

7) Teach me d way 2 woo a girl on d campus

- *You better maintain*

8) HELL is REAL, *b* RELIGIOUS and do *gd*

- Where is HELL
- HEAVEN or HELL all *dey* AFRICA or *u no c d* SCORCHING SUN of AFRICA
- *Na lie*

9) JUDGMENT DAY

No shaking

10)Jesus is *d* answer

- What is the question
- *Ur problems*
- Stop religious *metality*
- *Wawa*. It is MENTALITY

GRAFFITI ON THE POLYTECHNIC ESTABLISHMENT AND STAFF

11)SUG Election – POLITICS is a DIRTY game

- No rigging, no *magu-magu-* no *ojoro*

12)*LUV ur* LECTURERS and their marks shall *b urs*

13)*PLS* Sir, *no ojoro dis* time around

14)STRIKE! STRIKE!! STRIKE!!!

- Call it off or else …

15)Just pay us our N10,000 *4* SIWES

16)Lecturers no dey teach o

- *O boy, no stress ur self*
- *Handout go solve am*
- Mark well

GRAFFITI ON GENERAL ISSUES

17)Women are aids vectors

- If woman are aids vectors then MEN are RESERVIORS and AMPLIFIERS HOST!!

18)BUY *UR* RECHARGE CARDS HERE

19)BEWARE! Don't use paper

- *No Shaking*

20)MAN – *U 4* LIFE

- *I no sense*

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
1)	BEWARE! Aids is real - *No shaking* - *Condom dey*	Verdictive	Desist from indiscriminate sex and if you must, then use a condom	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

As could be seen from the above table, the linguistic context of the code 'BEWARE!' written in capital letters for clarity with an accompanying exclamation mark for emphasis, has a locutionary act of warning and alerting. The content of the text is explicitly expressed in simple language except for the sub-text, which is expressed in Nigerian pidgin English. The code, '*No shaking*' means 'No problem'; '*condom dey*' means 'there is condom' or 'condom is available'. A perlocutionary feeling of awareness is generated in the audience with a general informative effect.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
2)	BEWARE! Pussy kills - *It is bc u lost ur penis* - *U ar very ras*	Verdictive	Do not indulge in sex indiscriminately	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

The theme 'BEWARE!', written in capital letters, signifying clarity and emphasis has the illocutionary act of warning. The gravity of the message is accentuated by an exclamation mark. Our physical and linguistic contexts of the code 'pussy' render it ambiguous:

denotatively '*pussy'* stands for 'a cat' and connotatively, it stands for the female genitalia'; a contemptuous term for a woman. Our world knowledge with mutual conceptual beliefs (MCBs), psychological and socio-cultural contexts presupposed that most students at this stage are sexually active. This therefore, entails that the latter meaning is inferred. The content of the text is intended to create awareness and to warn the audience to desist from such act.

Based on shared knowledge of the theme, the interlocutors, reduce a more serious issue creating a humour schema by the introduction of Nigerian slangy expression: '*very ras*' meaning 'very uncivilized'; and a GSM text message mode: '*bc'* meaning 'because', '*u*' meaning 'you', '*ur*' meaning 'your' and '*ar'* meaning 'are'.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
3)	My ROD is 2 BIG - *Go fuck ur mother*	Commissive	Inviting other participants for comments.	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

Written in bold capital letters, '*ROD'* and 'BIG' signify emphasis / clarity. The physical and linguistic contexts of the code '*ROD'* renders it ambiguous: denotatively it means 'a stick' and the

connotative meaning is ‘a penis’. Deducing from the sub-text, the decoder is presupposed to have understood the intended message. It entails that the later meaning (i.e. connotative meaning) is inferred. The code ‘*ur’* means ‘your’ while the whole system with a possible performative verb ‘is’ seeks for comments from other participants.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
4)	Guerrilla WAR in Niger-Delta - *No be small thing o*	Verdictive	There is a struggle by a group for emancipation of the Niger Delta.	-	Informative alerting, fear,

DISCUSSION

The code ‘WAR’ in the above text is especially bold in capital letters, indicating the magnitude of the situation. With the world knowledge of the political situation in the country, it entails that the Niger region is waging war by the Niger Delta militia against the government for a fair share of the resources from oil. The content of the message has the illocutionary force of announcing, reporting and alarming, not of denouncing or condemning the act. The linguistic context of ‘WAR’ in the text has the possible effect indirectly instigating groups to rise up to war with the government. ‘*No be small thing*’ is a Nigerian phrase that means, ‘it is not a joke’. Generally, the system creates a perlocutionary effect of fear and apprehension to the target audience.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
5)	NO WAY FOR IWU- Nigerians says ENOUGH is ENOUGH	Verdictive	INEC chairman should be changed.	-	Persusive, influencing

DISCUSSION

The theme of the above graffiti begins with a negative marker with the accompanying sense of prevention, obstruction and disallowing. The main text is rendered in bold capital letters to persuade the audience to agree with the intended message. Given the linguistic, world knowledge and socio-political contexts, the signified, (Professor Maurice Iwu) is not ready to resign, the author is calling for mass mobilization to remove him. With a possible performative verb, the whole system crates a perlocutionary effect to influence, mobilize and challenge the audience.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
6)	*Keke Napep – Wazob*?	Behavitive	Demanding to know the where about or the sudden disappearance of keke Napep	-	Informative reassuring threatening

DISCUSSION

In the above text the linguistic context of the code '*keke'* is intended to signify 'bicycle' which is a kind of a motor bike and '*Napep'* is an acronym for 'National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programme'. The programme was initiated by the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, to alleviate the transportation problem of the Nigerian masses. The code '*wuzob'* is a Nigerian slangy expression which is popular among the youths especially students. It means, '*what is up*?' or 'what is going on?' A feeling of doubt and apprehension is created in the mind of the reader as to the reliability of government programmes of such nature. With an implicit referent, the message is a direct face-threatening act intended to mobilize the audience to act.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
7)	*Teach me d way 2 woo a girl on d campus* - You better maintain.	Commissive	Invitation for participation	-	Urging influencing

DISCUSSION

The theme of the above graffiti demands a possible exchange from any participation. The language is simple but the linguistic context

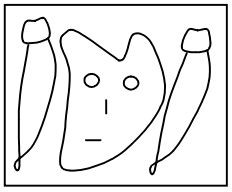
reflects the GSM text messages mode in vogue nowadays. For example '*d*' stands for '*the'*, '*2*' stands for '*to'* while the sub-context reflects the use of Nigerian English expression, '*you better maintain*" which means 'you better behave'. Generally, the whole system is an invitation to participate.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
8)	HELL IS REAL *b* RELIGIOUS *and do gd.* - Where is HELL? HEAVEN or HELL all *dey* AFRICA or *u no c d* SCORCHING SUN of AFRICA - *Na lie*	Verdictive	The existence of hell is emphasized but the audience is advised to be religious to avoid going to hell fire.	-	Informative but confusing

DISCUSSION

Two concepts of 'hell' as a place after-life punishment and a pre-death punishment are implied in the above text. In this integration, the religious world knowledge of 'hell' as 'a container for heat' maps onto a physical entity, the continent of Africa, also seen here as a referent. Boldly written in capital letters, the codes, 'Hell' signifies danger,

'HEAVEN', 'AFRICA' and 'SCORCHING', also emphatically stated, thus become corresponding codes of heat revolving around the frame of activity, burning hell as punishment. Connotatively stated, the transfer of inference from the code, 'heat', from one terrestrial divide to another presupposes that just as hell is in the Christian theological model, the place for suffering; and also by implication, sinners in hell, then Africans under the sun legitimately become corresponding entities. Hell is hot for sinners after death and also Africa is hot for Africans before death. The linguistic context of the codes, '*gd', 'u', 'c', 'b', 'd*', reflect the GSM communication system which stand for 'good', 'you', 'see', 'be', and 'the. While '*dey', 'no', 'na*' and '*na lie*' are pidgin English expressions which stand for, 'is in', 'do not', 'it is' and 'it is a lie'.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
9)	JUDGMENT DAY - *No shaking* 	Verdictive	After death comes judgment.	+	Informative, warning, fear.

DISCUSSION

In the above graffiti, the message is presupposed to be understood by the audience. The icon of a skull and bones accentuate the sense of this theme which implies death. The content of the text is less wordy and is an intentional strategy to influence the audience to believed in the message. The linguistic context of the co-text 'No shaking' presupposed to have been written by another participant, is a Nigerian expression that means 'it is all good, no problem.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
10)	Jesus is d answer - What is the question - *Ur* problems - Stop religious *metality* - *Wawa*. It is MENTALITY.	Verdictive	In order to be saved, the only way is through Jesus..		Informative but confusing

DISCUSSION

As seemingly constative act, the language of the text above is simple with a force of assertion. The message raises a fundamental question which is intended to instill a feeling of fear as well as assurance. The content of the sub-text implicates the linguistic context of antonym as

'question' serves as antonym of 'answer', while the final solution that 'answer' suggests is set aside to give birth to the literal meaning. Literally, an answer follows a question and a question ends with a question mark which is absent in this piece of graffiti. It is interesting to know that the last decoder easily detects the spelling error made by the previous decoder. The perlocutionary effect of this indirect speech act intended to be decoded given the world knowledge and MCB's is presupposed to be spiritual with illocutionary force of asserting, declaring and maintaining. The code '*wawa'* is a Hausa word for 'fool'. The whole system contains a debate schema.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
11)	SUG Election POLITICS is a DIRTY game - No rigging, *no magu-magu, no ojoro*	Verdictive	We need credible free and fair election	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

The linguistic code 'SUG' in the graffiti above stands for 'students Union Government' while 'POLITICS' and 'DIRTY' are written in bold capital letters for clarity and emphasis to draw the attention of the audience. The content of the theme is constatively stated with the

illocutionary act of maintaining. The predominance of the negative marker in the sub-text renders the whole system challenging. The linguistic context of '*magu-magu*' and '*ojoro'* is a Nigerian expression that mean 'unfair or bias'.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
12)	*LUV ur* LECTURERS and their marks shall *b urs.*	Expositive	Lecturers favour students that love them	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

The language of the message above is simple but the content is deceptive. The linguistic context of the codes '*luv', 'ur*', '*b*' and '*urs'* stand for 'love', 'your', 'be' and 'yours'. 'LECTURERS', written in bold capital letters for clarity / emphasis is explicitly stated as a direct speech act. Illocutionary force of asserting and declaring is maintained as the text is constatively stated.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
13)	PLS Sir, no *ojoro dis* time around mark well	Excersitives verdictive	The referent is advised to be fair in marking	-	Informative reassuring threatening

DISCUSSION

This graffiti begins with a plea and an accompanying sense of threat and reminding. The code '*PLS'* written in capital letters is an acronym for "PLEASE" which presents an attractive image to persuade the signified (Sir). From the text, '*no ojoro*' is a Nigerian phrase that means 'no fairness'. It is presupposed, from the linguistic content that there is no fairness in the marking system. The referent is therefore, being pleaded with to change.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
14)	STRIKE! STRIKE!! STRIKE!!! Call it off or else	Excersitive commissive	Attention should be given to the issue of strike.	-	Informative challenging threatening

DISCUSSION

The message of the triple single worded theme, writing in bold capital letters with accompanying exclamation marks for clarity and emphasis, is pungent. It renders itself to ambiguity at two levels. The content at the first level is presupposed to mobilize the audience to embark on a strike action, while at the second level, it is presupposed to challenge a strike action already embarked upon (by lecturers or students). A direct threat is inferred in the subtext.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
15)	Just pay us our N10,000 *4* SIWES	Excersitive	Demanding for payment of allowance	-	Informative persuasive Threatening

DISCUSSION

The linguistic context of 'SIWES' is presupposed to be understood by the audience. It is an acronym for 'Students Industrial Work Experience', intended for students to acquire practical skills/knowledge during the course of their studies. From the linguistic content together with world knowledge, the text entails that the encoder is demanding for payment from the management of the institution which is presupposed to be the organizer of the program. The illocutionary act of pleading, lamenting, threatening and asking is maintained. The code, 'just' signifies a force to act or else, and inference of the unsympathetic disposition of the encoder alleged distress, can be drawn. The speech act is performative, directing at the school establishment.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
16)	*Lecturers no dey teach O* - *O boy, no stress urself* - *Handouts go solve am*	Verdictive	Since lecturers are not teaching, students will rely on their handouts	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

As could be seen from the text above, the language is simple pidgin English intentionally aimed at the desired result. The linguistic context of the main theme, '*lecturers no dey teach o*' means, 'lecturers do not teach' while the sub-texts, '*o boy, no stress urself' and 'handouts go solve am*' mean 'old boy, do not stress yourself', and 'Handouts will solve the problem' respectively. The content of this graffiti is also informative enough and is principally emotive, designed to complain about the signified (lecturers).

GRAFFITI ON GENERAL THEMES

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
17)	Women are aid vectors - If women are aids vectors then MEN are RESERVIORS and AMPLIFIERS HOSTS!!	Verdictive	It implies that women store the aids virus while men transfer and spread the disease.	-	Informative but confusing

DISCUSSION

The linguistic context of the technical codes, 'vectors' 'reserviours', 'amplifier' and 'hosts' denotes a pungent use of language to create the desired effect of the message. The content of the text does not in anyway convince the audience to believe the presupposed message.

However, that it informs the audience rather unconvincingly, the authors have created a debate schema for others participants. The use of capital letters here is compelling, 'MEN' 'RESERVIOURS', 'AMPLIFIER' and 'HOSTS'. The double use of the exclamation marks '!!' makes the message laudible and irresistible.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
18)	Buy *Ur* RECHARGE CARDS HERE	Commissive	Recharge cards are sold here and you should buy them.	See appendix I	Informative, persuasive, influencing.

DISCUSSION

The graffiti above is a drawing accompanied by a message that is written in bold letters for clarity and emphasis. The linguistic content is written in clear simple language except for the code '*UR'*, which stands for 'your'. The mode of the GSM text system is responsible for the linguistic '*UR'* code. The whole system instills a parlocutionary effect of getting the decoder to buy recharge cards at this point. It is an advertorial (see Appendix I).

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
19)	BEWARE! Don't use paper - *No shaking*	Excersitive	Using paper in the toilet will cause blockage	-	Informative

DISCUSSION

Written in capital letters with an accompanying exclamation mark signifying clarity / emphasis, the theme of the above graffiti is in simple language. The linguistic context of the code, '*No Shaking*' is a Nigerian phrase that means 'No problem. From the linguistic content, it is presupposed that papers are being used in the toilet. Generally, the message instills a sense of warning.

	Graffiti	Act type	Communicative value	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect on target audience
20)	MAN-U 4 LIFE - *I no sense*	Verdictive	MAN-U is the football club people should belong.	-	Informative, persuasive, influencing

DISCUSSION

In the above text, the code, 'MAN-U *4* LIFE' is an acronym for 'Manchester United for Life', which is a football club slogan. From the linguistic content of the message, written in simple language, it is deduced that the author is a die-hard fan of the signified club. The illocutionary force of declaring is intended while announcing and maintaining the status quo. Also, the linguistic context of the subject, '*I no sense*' which is a Nigerian slangy expression, means 'I don't care'.

4.3 RESEARCH RESULTS

The analyzed data above are broadly interpreted under the following pragma-semiotic factors.

1) Act type (verdictives, commissive, expositive, excersitives and behavitives), (Austin 1962, Lecture 12).
2) Communicative value
3) Pictorial accompaniment
4) Word density
5) Perlocutionary effect

A general presentation of the previous analysis is given in the next table.

Data	Act type	Word density	Pictorial accompaniment	Perlocutionary effect
1)	Verdictive	8	-	Informative
2)	Verdictive	14	-	Informative
3)	Commisive	9	-	Informative
4)	Verdictive	9	-	Informative, alerting, fear
5)	Verdictive	9	-	Persuasive, influencing
6)	Behavitive	3	-	Challenging, informative
7)	Commisive	14	-	Urging, Influencing
8)	Verdictive	28	-	Informative

9)	Verdictive	17	-	Informative, influencing
10)	Commisive	18	-	Informative
11)	Expositive	9	-	Informative
12)	Exersitive	9	-	Informative influencing threatening
13)	Exersitive Commissive	8	-	Challenging threatening Informative
14)	Excersitive,	7	-	Influencing
15)	Verdictive	14	-	Informative, challenging
16)	Verdictive	4	+	Informative, warning, fear
17)	Verdictive	16	-	Informative
18)	Commissive	5	+	Informative, persuasive, influencing
19)	Excersitive	6	-	Informative
20)	Verdictive	7	-	Informative, persuasive, influencing.

Table 1: A Tabular Report of Analysis.

Table 1 shows the wholistic description of the analysis, from datum 1 to 20. There are 12 verdictives, 4 commissives, 4 excersitive and expositive and behavitive, 1 each. The sign (-) means ‘absent’ while the sign (+) means ‘present’. Total word density of all the data (1-20)

is 209. The lowest number of words is found in datum 12 while datum 14 carries the highest number.

In terms of accompanying graffiti with pictures, the samples, of course exclude the numerous drawings mostly of sex organs or a couple engaged in sexual act. Adedimeji A.

(2007:156) in Critical *perspectives on English Language and Literature*, posits that in identifying the text:

> Wherever possible, include a copy of the text with your analysis if it, nothing any significant short-comings of the copy. Where including a copy is not practicable, offer a clear description which allows someone to recognize the text easily if they encountered it themselves. Briefly describe the medium used, the genre to which the text belongs and the context in which it was found.

Under perlocutionary effect, 18 are informative, 4 persuasive, 5 influencing, while others are a combination of warning, challenging, reassuring, embarrassing, alerting and confusing.

4.4 FINDINGS

The preceding analysis of twenty graffiti and the results engender the following observations, which constitute our findings.

i) Performatives (i.e. explict performatives) are mostly face threatening but face threatening acts (FTA's) need not always contain (explicit) performative as shown by datum 9.

ii) Doing things with words can as well be achieved without performative verbs as shown by data 10 and 16.

iii) The less wordy or capitalized a graffiti is, the more the tendency to be direct or engaged in face threatening acts (FTA's) as shown by data 1, 2, 13 and 16.

iv) Picture add more meaning to the linguistic texts as they complement speech acts (direct or indirect) to increase or diminish the force / sense of the locutions as shown by data 16 and 18.

v) Direct speech acts seldom need pictorial accompaniments as the lillocutionary force has been portrayed in linguistic forms e.g data 15 and 11.

vi) Name calling (directly or indirectly) is face – threatening as it is a violation of deference in politeness theory (Thomas, 1995: 151). The restraint one exercises in calling names, especially where titles are not attached, the more one shows" the awareness of another person's face" (Yule, 1996: 60), and vice versa. Example is shown by data 5,11,15,17.

vii) Features of text-messaging like abbreviations, language contractions and sensational spellings can be noticed as shown in data 2, 3, 11, 12, 8, 20.

viii) The language in the selected samples of graffiti essentially reflects a major feature of English in a second language situation as used by a specific age group, the adolescent and young adults.

ix) It will be observed that some of the sample presented above manifest metaphoric blends in one or other lexical item or an expression through the integration of various, sometimes contradictory, semantic units, resulting in puns, ambiguities or ironies. Hence, lexical form may be invested with two or more integrating concepts to yield an emergent structure that is either an event structure, effect metaphor or image metaphor as n datum 8. Conceptual integration, according to Fauconnier and Turner (1995) operates in many areas – everyday meaning construction, conceptual change, metaphor and analogy, scientific discovery, counterfactual reasoning, grammar, action and design of which graffiti constitute fitting examples.

x) Two schemas appear to be germane to the activity of graffiti writing. The first is the humour schema by which graffiti writing has come to be identified, as shown by datum 2 line 2. The second is the debate schema, which on the other hand, is structured by conversations that can be decomposed into assertions and refutals, and on the other by questions and answers as shown by data 8, 9 and 17.

xi) Graffiti are clearly sites for public debates which allow multiple entries, although such debates are not always structured along conventional dictates of the debate schema as shown by data 2, 7, 15, 8, 9 and 17.

xii) Some graffiti are graphic as seen in datum 16, while others are expressives.

4.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

A wide variety of topics, ranging from sexual matters to those relating to national issues, in the samples of students' graffiti were reproduced in this research. The graffiti on sex and sexual matters however, were not all reproduced due to their obscene nature.

Students resort to writing these graffiti as a means of "opening up their minds" and letting pent-up feelings which might very well be the case. It would appear therefore, that for some universities and polytechnic students, graffiti on the doors and walls of toilets form a means of giving outlet to repressed feelings and thereby unloading their troubled minds.

It was observed that graffiti carries the elements associated with oral medium of communication among young adults, displaying some elements of code-mixing, and acronyms which signal adventurism.

Hence, elements from the various linguistic codes of speakers, ranging from the formal standard English to the highly informal pidgin (‘*na lie*’ meaning ’it is a lie’).

The amount of dynamism and creativity in text messaging shows how language users respond quickly to social changes in relation to their language needs.

It is axiomatic, therefore, that for one to gain full insight of a graffitist’s intended meaning, one has to be conversant with his linguistic system since the authors use the ‘language’ that best express their intents and purposes, and in ways that are habitual to them. In other words, shared knowledge of conventional expression and other information on the subject of discussion are conditions for full understanding, since many facts are taken for granted.

Several presuppositions must also be understood. For instance that Iwu was INEC chairman, and that he was not popular in the country, to fully understand the ironical intention signaled by the invectives, as well as the prevalence of religious themes which confirm the generally held notion that religion permeates all facets of societal life in Nigeria, and the several implicatures in all the graffiti.

From the examples above, we have tried to point out that meaning representation and perception occurs at different levels of linguistic interaction. People make representations by employing known linguistic resources. Obviously, the more daring social group such as students take liberties with such resources as word relations that result in a kind of libertine humour at both the direct and indirect levels. And what is more, the ability to generate new meanings through such revolutionary words relations appears to be endless since group members who are respondents to the different language stimuli are aware of the direct or indirect inferences and interpretations of such stimuli and are thus able to provide appropriate responses.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AN CONCLUSION

5.0 SUMMARY

The focus of this study has been to examine the phenomenon of graffiti (writing on the wall) with a view to explicate the effect inherent in them on the target audience. In addition to this, the study was to account for the linguistic context of the data and also identify the aspects of life these writings address in doing this, twenty graffiti were collected directly from the walls of students classrooms, classes and toilets for analysis.

In chapter one, the background to the study was introduced and the subject of research was explained. Various dimensions within the purview of the phenomenon (graffiti) were also looked at. Also highlighted in this chapter was the fact that graffiti, a written language, offers an understanding of how language really works in one of its most natural environment at any given age. To conclude the chapter, the statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study and scope and delimitation of the study were all examined.

In chapter two, the few materials that were relevant and available to the study were reviewed. The dearth of the material in this area of

study coupled with the fact that the data is amorphous made us adopt an eclectic approach because we feel a single approach will be inadequate to handle the study of this nature. Hence an approach that constitute pragmatics and semiotics, given the fact that there is a natural relationship between the two, it follows that an integration to graffiti analysis will be fruitful.

Whereas the discussion on semiotics was based on its metalanguage highlighted in chapter two was concerned with the underlying and signifying structure of all symbolic systems. Speech acts, a linguistic construct under pragmatics was also adopted. The theory looks at the totality of the signification systems, linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (pictorial) in the communicative process and the concomitant effects of these signs on the participants, immediate or remote, in a given context. The five acts, verdictives, expositives, behavities, commissives and excersitives were used in the analysis in chapter four.

Chapter three deals with the methodology adopted for the study. It also serves as the background against which the findings and conclusion of the study could be appraised. It is made up of the following components: sources of data, method of data collection and analytical procedure.

Chapter four constitutes presentation of data, analysis with features of pragma-semiotic theory synthetically serving as a model to the study.

5.1 CONCLUSION

Our analysis and discussions of the data on graffiti have revealed that:

1) The writings have aesthetic values
2) The walls serve as media on which students express their feelings. It is a fundamental phenomenon by which students who are not able to get their feelings and ideas published in the dailies or rather public forum bring their feelings to public awareness.
3) The writings offer students an exposure to another language variety, that is the language of graffiti.
4) Another way graffiti serve as communication is that they initiate an act of dialogue or conversation.
5) The work refutes some of the known opinions regarding the functions of graffiti by showing that graffiti fulfill basic roles apart from serving as outlets for otherwise repressed feelings, opinions and thoughts. They are meant to inform the audience, affect his opinions by persuading him towards a particular point

of view, influence and orient him morally towards more beneficial and positive goals, warn about impending danger, and generally integrate everyone for mass participation in the desired and altruistic regeneration of development efforts.

In all, we find that graffiti expound on contemporary issues in a language that is not only living, but is functional. Thus, they make use of distinct lexical and grammatical organizations such as debate and humour schemas that have pragmatic implications for the relevant society. When decoded, it is found that graffiti orchestrate publicly held views and commentaries on social, economic and political issues of contemporary interest, constituting a social tableau of idea in the living language of the day. The implication of all these is that graffiti is about a language behaviour and language is about life. The knowledge of graffiti thus gives meaning to our lives by adding more value to how we generate, interpret and transmit meaning in our world of signs.

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APPENDIX I



A sample piece of graffiti (datum 18)