A Semiotic Analysis of Urban Graffiti: The Case Study of Bejaia City

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Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to my family and friends.

Chaima

Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to my beloved parents Rabah and Fatima, to whom I owe everything beautiful in life. They have always been by my side in failure as in success; words cannot give enough credit. I also would like to dedicate this work to my dear sisters: Guermia, Hayette, Samia, and Nadira, to my brother Omar, to my nephews Massyl and Yanis, to my nieces Sarah and Amel-Razen; and all my friends especially Bob for their love and support.

Melissa

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Abstract

The present study intends to analyse semiotically some urban graffiti collected from Bejaia city (Algeria). It aims to identify, analyse; describe, and explain the meaning behind each graffiti. For this reason, a total number of thirty graffiti were collected from different quarters of the city of Bejaia to serve as a corpus for this study. Moreover, fifteen interviews were conducted randomly with Bougiote citizens. Relying on the Triadic Semiotic Theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, the corpus was classified according to their meaning. The research adopted a qualitative method where we used a semiotic analysis of the graffiti to provide an extensive understanding of our study. The results reached in this study reveal that Berber, Arabic, French, and, English are the main languages used on graffiti in Bejaia City. Besides, most of the graffiti reflect the Algerian identity and the social reality since the main meanings of the graffiti are: identity, politics, sport, and daily life issues. Finally, graffiti are drawn in both perspectives .i.e., artistically and non-artistically.

Key Words: Urban Graffiti, Semiotics, Bejaia City, Triadic Semiotic Theory of Charles Sanders Peirce.

Table of Content

General Introduction

Chapter One

Theoretical Background

Section One: Introducing Graffiti

Section Two: Introducing Semiotics

Chapter Two

Research Method, Analysis & Discussion of the Findings

Section One: Research Methodology

Section Two: Analysis & Discussion of the Findings

General Conclusion

Appendices

Appendix : Samples of the graffiti

Appendix : Interview

Résumé

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One

Chapter Two

List of Abbreviations

G N°: Graffiti Number

Lge: Language

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Introduction

In the past 20 years, freedom of speech was not an easy task. In that time, people were not able to express their disagreement and refusal easily. The Government was very strict about this matter. They could be punished or even jailed just because they dared to give their opinions. As a matter of fact, for some of them, writing and drawing on the wall seemed to be the only alternative. Graffiti has not become only an art but also a universal phenomenon used as a way of expression in the world.

Recently, this phenomenon begins to be recognized as an urban art in Algeria due to social unrest, political and cultural protest movements. Many people consider graffiti as the best way to share public voice that sometimes may not be heard in a society full of opinions and positions via social media.

2. Source of Inspiration

Three reasons attracted our attention and motivated us to conduct this study:

1- Detect the reasons for the emergence and spreading of this phenomenon over the past few years in the field of our investigation.

2- Deepen our knowledge (political, social, cultural...) on the city of Bejaia.

3- Few research studies in this field are conducted in the Algerian universities, in general, and in our department of English of Bejaia, in particular.

3. Statement of the Problem and Questions of the Study

Wherever we go in the world, whether we are travelling to a foreign country, or moving to a quiet neighborhood we are bound to encounter graffiti. At recent years, this kind of art has invaded the Algerian society, in general, and the Bougiote society, in particular. Especially with the birth of the "Hirak"; the Algerian protests movement that started in 16th February 2019. Some artists tend to use graffiti to achieve specific objectives such as to tell about specific events in time, to tell about feelings, art, people, culture, politics, identity, and society, in general.

Besides, people can see graffiti from different perspectives according to the colors, signs, and the different languages used. Some advocate and consider it as an art, while others view it as vandalism. This leads us to think and ask the following questions:

1. What is the possible semiological interpretation of the graffiti?
2. What are the different languages used by the graffiti writers?
3. Does graffiti reflect the Algerian Identity?
4. Is graffiti art or vandalism?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the present study is to identify, analyse, describe, and explain the meaning behind some selected graffiti found in Bejaia City. Besides, to identify the different languages used in the graffiti and to see whether graffiti reflects the Algerian identity or not. Finally to recognize if this phenomenon is an art or vandalism.

5. Assumptions of the Study

In the present study, we assume that:

1. Berber, Arabic, French, and, English are the main languages used on graffiti in Bejaia City.
2. Identity, politics, sport, and some issues related to the social life are the main meanings of the graffiti.
3. Most of the graffiti reflect the Algerian identity and the social reality.
4. Graffiti are drawn in both perspectives .i.e., artistically and non-artistically.

6. Significance of the Study

The main interest of the present study consists of a semiotic analysis and description of some collected graffiti from Bejaia City. Accordingly, this research is among the fewest studies done in the field of semiotics in the department of English at the University of Bejaia. Finally, we hope that this study will incite students of English of Bejaia University to conduct more research in the field of linguistics especially semiotics.

7. **Organization of the Study**

This research paper falls into two main parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part includes two sections: 1) Graffiti, and 2) Semiotics

The latter includes three sections. This chapter describes the research method followed in the study. It includes the presentation of the corpus and the interview of the study, and data collection. Besides, the general conclusion, limitation and implications of the study, and some suggestions for further research.

Chapter One
Theoretical Background

Chapter One

Theoretical Background

Introduction

The present chapter is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to graffiti, the second to semiotics, and the context of the study.

Section One

Introducing Graffiti

In modern times, graffiti has become a universal urban phenomenon since it forms a basis for self-expression. It delivers an opportunity for people who find walls as a medium of communication to unload their minds and thoughts.

1.1. Definition of Graffiti

Graffiti refers to texts or images scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly in public places. It is considered to be a form of expression in the world. Rodriguez and Clair (as cited in Lapyai, 2003) conceptualize graffiti as a means of communication that provides people opportunities to produce anonymous texts. So, graffiti is considered as an anonymous tool to communicate for people who look for a medium to reveal and manifest certain feelings, ideas, opinions, and discourses that are more or less forbidden. Moreover, the message provided by graffiti reflects to us what is going on inside the society, because generally people tend to use walls to describe and express their political or controversial opinions. (Able & Buckley as cited in Alonso, 1998).

Thus, Hookstra (2009) characterises graffiti as a kind of vandalism that can act to herald more serious forms of crime in an area since she quotes Gibson (1994) who states that: "...walls covered with graffiti suggest tears in the fabric of society. It's synonymous with a loss of control. It says there is a group of people who can and will destroy public property and who can show ineffective security is." (p.1)

Therefore, graffiti can be used as a means of marking territory and showing the identity of a social community.

Dar (2013) states that: "graffiti writers do much more than write graffiti. They assume a social identity that is conducive to the norms, standards, and values of the graffiti subculture." (p.4) He deduced two types of identities: "personal identity defined as one's self-concept based on the role one holds within the context of interpersonal relationship and social identity, described as an identity that represents group membership and is primarily active within the context of group related circumstances or activities." (p.5)

From a lexical point of view, graffiti is defined as "drawings or writing done on a wall, etc. in a public place without permission." (Oxford Dictionary, 2020).

To sum up, graffiti characterized in drawings and writings on public places without asking for any permission from the owner of the wall. It is used as a way of expression and communication between the members of a society. Besides, graffiti reflects the society from different perspectives. That is to say, it is used to show people's identity, issues related to society, points of view, and feelings.

1.2. Origins of Graffiti

The word graffiti is derived from the Italian word "graffito" which means to scratch on a surface. The scratch can be done at any surface with any implement permanent or not. Graffiti is considered as illicit application of a medium to the surface. These media can include spray paint pencil, stickers, charcoal…etc. Graffiti can be traced back to the cave art of Paleolithic Age. The first cave painting appeared 10.000 years ago, also known as the "Old Stone Age".

Shillington (as cited in Alonson,1998) argued that archeologists used graffiti as a way to learn about history of writing that can be traced back to ancient Egyptians, who developed one of the oldest forms of writing in the world named "Hieroglyphics".

Many researchers (eg, Apple,2006; O'Doherty, 2012; and Daly, 2013) regard graffiti writing as the earliest form of human expression that proceeded in primitive times. This partly explains why societies are still involved in the practice of graffiti.

According to Decker and Curry (2020) graffiti is found first in the remains of the Mayan city of Tikal in Central America, as in many other places such as in Spain in the 16th century, in the medieval English churches, in the United States, and in Europe.

In other part, the word "Graffiti" is derived from the Italian language. This art can be traced back to the Old Stone Age. It refers to the decoration of the walls of rock shelters and caves throughout the world.

1.3. Styles of Graffiti

There are different styles of graffiti used by graffiti writers. The main styles found in the Algerian society are:

1.3.1. Tag

"Tag is graffiti writing in its purest, simplest form, but to the majority of people, it's ugly and indecipherable" (Lewisohn, 2008, p. 48)

We can say that the tag designates a brand or a signature and most of the time its letters form the name of the artist. It is simple and easy to be read, and it includes one color.

Figure 1.3.1: Tag Taken from Targa Ouzemour Bejaia

1.3.2. Throw-up

Researches showed that a throw-up is an intermediate form between the tag and the piece. It has two or more colors, and bubble-style lettering. It is easy to be realized. Graffiti artists usually choose to make two or three letters of their pseudonym.

In other words, throw-up is a quick graffiti. It is often of one or two colours. It contains a symbol, letter, abbreviation or short word.

Figure 1.3.2: Throw-up Taken from Bejaia downtown

1.3.3. Wild style

McMahon (2020) defined wild style graffiti as a form of graffiti which involves the use of highly stylized letters. This type of graffiti is probably the most famous found around the world, thanks to its complexity and high level of detail. Wild style is a complicated form of graffiti. It is often very hard to be read by people who are not familiar with it.

Figure 1.3.3: Wild Style Taken from Settara Jijel

1.3.4. Piece

Randal (2014) stated that graffiti term 'piece', short of masterpiece, is used to describe a large, complex, time-consuming and labor-intensive graffiti painting, usually painted by skilled and experienced writers. It is generally agreed that a painting must have at least three colors to be considered a graffiti piece, but 'pieces' often incorporate color transitions, shadows and three-dimensional effects. That is to say, a piece is a large picture that has been painted on a wall to show the artistic creativity and deliver messages behind.

Figure1.3.4: Piece Taken from Edimco Bejaia

1.4.Advantages and Disadvantages of Graffiti

Graffiti is of double-edged sword. It represents both positive and negative impacts on a society.

1.4.1. Advantages of Graffiti

According to Fuller (2017), graffiti is a way of bringing art to public. Nowadays, people neglect art. They consider going to museums and art exhibitions as an archaic life style. They are not exposed to works of art. This reason pushed artists to draw graffiti to raise people's attention and bring art directly to the public that will drive them to explore the art world further.

Furthermore, graffiti is considered to be a valuable form of self-expression. That is to say, graffiti offers an opportunity to people to express their disagreement and refusal easily. It is a way to share public voice such as political points of view. In addition to this, it brightens up area. In other words, thanks to well-worked graffiti, public places are more attractive and beautiful by the different colors used. People tag buildings with inspirational words and words of wisdom, motivating those who need it. It brings changes to the area where it appears.

1.4.2. Disadvantages of Graffiti

Rollinger (2015) stated some disadvantages of graffiti. According to her, Graffiti can represent a serious problem that impacts all members of society such as inappropriate pictures or words. Besides, it can make an area look trashy. That is to say, there are some graffiti which are drawn in a non-artistic way, consequently, they don't give a good view of the area.

Figure1.4.2: Tag Taken from Houma Karaman Bejaia Representing a Non-artistic Graffiti

Graffiti are very expensive to be removed. Figures from a variety of cities across the U.S. suggest that graffiti cleanup alone costs taxpayers about $1-3 per person each year. Illinois budgeted $6.5 million in 2006 for graffiti removal and Graffiti Blasters the city's removal program in Chicago.

Moreover, it could be associated with gangs or gang violence. In other words, graffiti can be used to communicate messages between gangs using codes with common meaning. The entire area and its inhabitants become targets for violence. Thus, it is considered to be as vandalism when it is done without asking for any permission from the owner of the wall.

Section Two

Introducing Semiotics

Introduction

The present study is part of sociolinguistics. It requires the use of semiotic analysis, which will allow us to analyse and identify the form and the meaning of graffiti of Bejaia City according to the semiotic aspects. Hence, in this section, we will discuss some key words related to the study of semiotics and the context of the present study.

2.1. Semiotic Approach:

The notion of the sign emerged in the 20th century, in both traditions: the European tradition, with Saussure who used the term "Semiology", and the Anglo-Saxon tradition, with Pierce who used the term "Semiotics".

According to Klinkenberg (1996), the two founding fathers agreed on attributing the two terms; semiology and semiotics to the science of signs and admitted that signs work like a formal system as well.

2.2. Definition of Semiotics

The origins of Semiotics date back to the Greek antiquity (from 1867-1868) from the work of the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. He stated that semiotics is the other name attributed to logic (Peirce, 1978, p. 58). Thus, semiotics is the study of signs and their meaning.

Yakin (as cited in Sudjiman and Zoest, 1996) argued that the semiotics word humbled its origins from Greek language "Semeion" meaning sign. Whereas Endaswara (2013) defined semiotics as the study of how to signify things.

In other words, semiotics is the study of signs systems and linguistic meanings. It studies the ways in which different signs systems allow individuals to communicate. Like other written texts and pictures, there are signs in graffiti.

2.3. Definition of semiology

Semiology is a branch of linguistics that studies communication systems. This discipline was born from the work of the Swiss linguist F. de Saussure and the American philosopher C. S. Peirce, at the beginning of the 20th century. For de Saussure, semiology is a science that studies signs within society that are apart from language. This science relates to linguistic and non-linguistic signifying systems. (de Saussure, 2002, p.26).

In other words, semiology is a general science of signs that focuses on linguistic and non-linguistic signifying systems. It studies signs in the social life.

2.4. Definition of Socio-semiotics

Bezemer & Jewitt (2009) stated that:

> *Social semiotics is concerned with meaning makers and meaning making.*
> *It studies the media of dissemination and the modes of communication*
> *that people use and develop to represent their understanding of the world*
> *and to shape power relations with others. It draws on qualitative, fine-*
> *grained analysis of records of meaning making, such as 'artifacts',*
> *'texts', and 'transcripts', to examine the production and dissemination of*
> *discourse across the variety of social and cultural contexts within which*
> *meaning is made. Different 'versions' of social semiotics have emerged*
> *since the publication of Michael Halliday's Language as Social Semiotic*
> *in 1978...(p.2)*

In other words, social semiotics studies the ways in which people use semiotic resources both to produce communicative artifacts and to interpret them in the context of specific social situations and practices.

2.5. Definition of Sign

Sebeok (1994) defined a sign as: "any mark, bodily movement, symbol, token, etc., used to indicate and to convey thoughts, information, commands, etc. It is the basis of human thought and communication." (p.10)

So, a sign is anything: a form, a gesture, an object, a colour, etc, which brings meaning.

2.6. The Notion of Sign

2.6.1. The Notion of Sign According to Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure was the first who treated the notion of linguistic sign. For him, the linguistic sign is made up of two parts; one represents the immaterial or conceptual part

called "Signified" and the other part represents the material part called the "Signifier". The signified is the objet designed by the signifier. In other words, the signified and signifier are important since they represent the basic components of the sign itself (de Saussure, 2002, p.101)
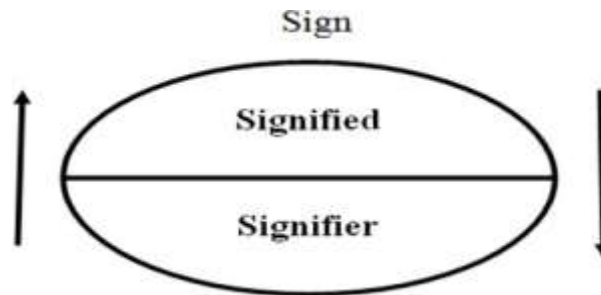
Figure2.6.1: Saussure's Model of Sign (Chandler, 2007, p.14)

2.6.2. The Notion of Sign According to Peirce

Pierce (1931) stated that:

> *A sign…[in the form of a representamen] is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a part of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen.* (1931, p.228)

That is to say, a sign is a reference of something material "representamen" in relation to the receiver named "object" and the interpretation of the receiver called "interpretant". We can deduce that the sign is made of three elements that maintain the relationships between one another.

Peirce(1931) classified them as follow:

1. **The representamen:** "The form which the sign takes (not necessarily material; though usually interpreted as such) called by some theorists the "Sign Vehicle"."
2. **An interpretant**: "Not an interpreter but rather the sense made by of the sign."
3. **An object:** "Something beyond the sign to which it refers (a referent)."
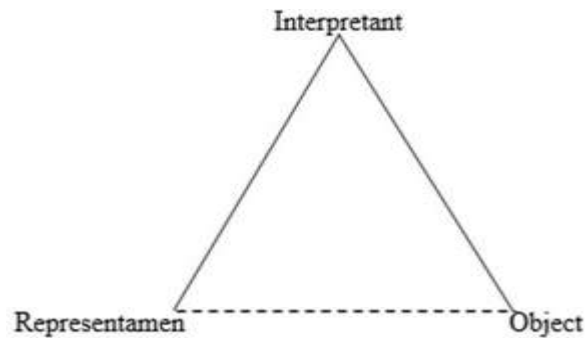
Figure 2.6.2: Peirce's Semiotic Triangle (Chandler, 2007, p.30)

2.7. Types of Sign

Peirce (1931) proposed a ternary classification of sign: icon, index, and symbol

2.7.1. Icon

"An icon is a sign which refers to the Object that denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such object actually exists or not…" (Buchler,1955, p. 102)

In other words, icon is a sign that has the character that makes it meaningful, even if the object does not exist, it has a relationship of resemblance to the things it represents. As an example of icon, consider a photograph in the passport representing the passport holder.

2.7.2. Index

Van Niekerk (2018) stated that "an index is strongly related or linked to the object that it refers to and thus must share a common feature with the object – if this were not so, it would not be able to refer to the object." (p.112)

In other words, an index is a sign that would lose the character of a sign if its object would be deleted, it is linked to the thing itself, and it maintains a physical relationship with the thing it designates. Smoke as a sign of fire and fever as a sign of flu are examples of index.

There are three main types of indexes:

    a)   **Person indexes**: They Aim at relating the participants taking place in a given situation to each other. Personal pronoun such as me, you, him, her or an indefinite pronoun such as the one, the other…etc, are examples of person indexes.

    b)   **Special indexes:** They refer to the spatial locations of objects, beings, and events in relation to the sign-user. Adverbs like here or there, demonstrative words such as this or that, and figures such as arrows are all examples of special indexes.

    c)   **Temporal indexes:** They relate things to each other in terms of time. Adverbs like now, before, after, then, timeline graphs representing points in time as located to the left and right of each other, and dates on calendars are examples of temporal indexes to illustrate with.

2.7.3. Symbol

Lim Tyan Gin (2017) argued "that a symbol is a sign linked to its object by virtue of conventions, agreements, or rules. Symbols are arbitrary and the meaning of symbols needs to be acquired."

According to Merriam-webster dictionary (2020), a symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.

Namely, symbol is a sign or character used as a conventional representation of an object, function, or process. For example, musical notes, language, and traffic lights.

Thus, icon, index, and symbol often meet in the creation of a sign or text. As an example, consider the following traffic sign taken from Danesi's book:

Figure2.7.3: A crossroad (Danesi, 2004, p.31)

Danesi (2007) explained that:

> *The signifier of this sign consists of two straight lines intersecting at right angles. The vertical line has an arrowhead. This cross figure is, clearly, iconic because its shape visually resembles a "crossroads." But since the cross figure could easily be used to represent a "church" or a "hospital" in other situations (without the arrowhead of course), it is also symbolic insofar as we need to know that it has been chosen, by convention, to constitute a particular type of traffic sign. Finally, the sign is also an index because when it is placed near an actual crossroads it indicates that one is about to reach it physically, as indicated by the arrowhead. (p.32)*

As far as colour is characterized as a sign, it is obvious that each colour stands for something, and conveys a particular meaning.

Black (2000-2002) stated that the choice of colour is an important element that affects people emotionally and mentally. So he classified them as follow:

Colour	Symbolization
Red	Truth, strength, courage, excitement, creative energy, desire, danger, power, speed, passion, love, lust, aggression, heat, and fire.
Pink	Romance, charm, beauty, sweetness, feminine, delicacy, refined, refinement, calming, nature, security, warmth, tenderness, intuitive, sophisticated, well-bred, reserved, calm, even-keeled, and non-violent.
Orange	Vibrant, warmth, energy, balance, enthusiasm, flamboyant, creativity, courage, joy, love of people, expansive, extroverted, good natured, determination and demanding of attention.

Yellow	Original, imaginative, joy, happiness, idealistic, creative, artistic, spiritual, optimism, intellect, love of learning, light, sunshine, summer, fold, philosophy, cheer, hope, happiness, and energy.
Green	Health, wealth (money), spring, calm, sympathy, fertility, life, new growth, energy, faith, nature, environment, good luck, fresh, cool, youth, vigour, hope, cheerfulness, abundance, and generosity.
Blue	Trust, wisdom, tranquillity, love, confidence, conservatism, reliability, belonging, coolness, truth, quite, seriousness, harmony, serenity, patience, perseverance, peace, intelligence, unity, reassurance, trust, security, solitude, hope, generosity, cleanliness, order, sky, water, cold, technology, and loyalty.
Purple	Independence, intuition, intellectual, spiritual, creativity, mysterious, transformation, wisdom, enlightenment, royalty, nobility, ceremony, richness, power, sensitivity, passion, love, dignity, wit, keen, observation, super, sensitivity, vanity, and moodiness.
Black	Power, elegance, sophistication, formality, wealth, fear, evil, anonymity, unhappiness, depth, style, mourning, death, (western culture), mysterious, underground, remorse, seductive, sexy, and good technical colour.
White	Cleanliness, purity, chastity, virginal, youth, simplicity, clean, immaculate, fresh, bright, blinding, reverence, peace, humility, precision, innocence, birth, winter, snow, good, cold, clinical, sterile, mild, and spirituality.
Grey	Security, maturity, reliability, cool, conservative, composed, intelligence, staid, modesty, dignity, solid, practical, old age, sadness, and boring.
Brown	Strength, solidarity, maturity, credibility, stability, simplicity, comfort, quality, harmony, outdoors, reliability, endurance, home, and earth.

Table 01: Colours Significations

2.8. Stylistics of the Text:

The word "stylistics" is derived from "style" which originates from the Latin "stylus/stilus ". It is a slender pointed writing instrument used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as they scratched letters on wax- tablets. It is the combination of literary criticism and linguistics.

Style has been defined as the description and analysis of the variability forms of linguistic items in actual language use.

Burke(2014) defined stylistics as:

> *Stylistics, or 'literary linguistics' as it is sometimes called, is the study and analysis of texts; is in particular, although not exclusively, the study and analysis of literary texts. The origins of stylistics go back to the poetics, and especially to the rhetoric, of the ancient classical world. In ancient rhetoric it is principally the third of the five canons which is of importance to stylistics. The ancient Greeks called this third canon 'lexis', and the Romans referred to it as 'elocutio'. We know it today as style. (p. 1)*

In other words, Stylistics is a study of the different styles that are present in either a given utterance or a written text or document.

2.9. Figures of Speech and Literary Devices

Our daily speech is full of figurative language. Nevertheless we may not notice that. Figures of speech and literary devices seem to communicate our impressions, feelings, and thoughts more effectively than ordinary language. They are usually, used by poets so as to create vivid word pictures for the reader. They can be found in graffiti. Here are some of them:

2.9.1 Metaphor

It is a figure of speech used to compare between two things without using the words "like" or "as". It is made up of three elements: the **tenor**, the **vehicle**, and the **ground**. As an example, consider the following metaphor: "time is a thief"

Tenor	Ground	Vehicle
Time	Speed, quickness, swiftness	Thief

2.9.2. Personification

It is giving human characteristics, traits, or feelings to inanimate objects or abstract qualities. It is like metaphor in which the comparison is always made to a human being. Example: "The shadow of the moon danced on the lake". The writer gives a human character; which is dance, to the shadow of the moon.

2.9.3. Metonymy

It is a figure of speech in which the name of a thing is replaced with the name of something else with which it is completely associated. For instance, "Let me give you a hand." Hand here means help.

2.9.4. Anaphora

It means the deliberate repetition of the first part of the sentence in order to achieve an artistic effect. It is common for us to use anaphora in our everyday speech, to lay emphasis on the idea we want to convey, or for self-affirmation. For instance, "**My life** is my purpose. **My life** is my goal. **My life** is my inspiration." Here the author wanted to show the readers how much his/her life is important and the reason of being alive.

2.9.5. Paradox

From a lexical point of view, paradox is a situation or a statement that seems impossible or is difficult to understand because it contains two opposite facts or characteristics. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

In other words, paradox is a contradiction usually used to make a reader think over an idea in an innovative way. For instance, "Truth is honey, which is bitter".

2.9.6. Rhetorical questions:

A rhetorical question is a question that may not have an answer. It may have an obvious answer, but the questioner asks it to lay emphasis to the point.

Nordquist (2020) defined rhetorical question as a question that is asked merely for effect with no answer expected. As examples of rhetorical questions we can consider the following:

- Can fish swim?
- Is rain wet?

- Can birds fly?

2.9.7. Consonance

It is categorised as a literary device, usually used in both poetry and prose. It involves the repetition of similar consonant within a word, phrase, or sentence. Contrary to alliteration, consonance involves repetition of consonant sounds only. For example, **Al**l's we**ll** that ends we**ll**.

2.9.8. Acronyms

Nordquist (2020) defined the concept of acronym as a word formed from the initial letters of a name (for example, NATO, from North Atlantic Treaty Organization) or by combining initial letters of a series of words (radar, from radio detection and ranging).

Simply, acronym is a word consisted of the first letters of the word in a phrase. For example, **FBI** is an acronym which stands for **F**ederal **B**ureau of **I**nvestigation.

2.10. Description of Bejaia City

In this section, we will deal with the description of Bejaia City which is the case study of our research.

Bejaia is an Algerian city located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, 250 km east of Algiers, 93 km east of Tizi-Ouzou, 81,5 km northeast of Bordj Bou Arreridj, 70 km northwest of Setif, and 61 km west of Jijel.

Bejaia is the largest city in Kabylia. It was known under the name of Saldae during Roman colonisation. As it was called "Bougie" meaning candle, during the French colonization; for the quality of its candles made of beeswax. The mother tongue of its inhabitants is Kabyle. They also speak other languages like Arabic and French that are used in commercial buildings, private companies, and advertising that makes it a multilingual city. Bejaia inhabitants are known for their commitment to their customs and traditions, also for their hospitality.

It is a large tourist city in Algeria that is known for its impressive beaches and landscapes such as Cap Carbon, Pic des Singes, Gouraya, Cap Siglé, and les Aiguades. Sultan En-Nacer considered Bejaia as the most beautiful city in the world which deserves to bear the name of Little Mecca for its beautiful and awesome architecture which goes back to the Islamic conquest. (Féraud, 2014). In other words, it is considered the seat of Islamic civilization.

Each district in Algeria is distinguished by its culture. Bougiote people are committed to their own culture and consider Freedom of expression to be among their priorities. Currently, the way of expressing opinions, feelings, and ideas differs from one person to another in the city. We can find those who turn to newspapers, and social media, others to writing and singing. Some others turn to an urban expression which is graffiti.

This phenomenon is observed in the city where young people try to convey, transmit, and communicate their messages anonymously. It links between the youngsters and the society since the transmission and the communication of thoughts goes through it. Mahrouche (2013) stated that graffiti in Bejaia establishes a visual dialogue on a medium made public and interacts socially with the community of graffiti artists, but also with the rest of community and urban space Conceived   an indicator of the relationship between the graffiti artist and his sphere of action in the city of Bejaia,

graffiti becomes a mediator between the individual and the community.

Graffiti can be found in the most popular neighbourhoods in Bejaia like cité Said Bellil called "Lacifa", colonel Amirouche street, Medjahed Mohamed street called "Batima", Targa Ouzemour street, Houma Karaman, Daouadji, Port Sarrasin, Bourdj Moussa, and la Wilaya. Most artistic graffiti can be found in Lacifa, Batima, Port Sarrasin, and Targa Ouzemour where youngsters take advantages of the walls to make from them wonderful paintings. Whereas, the non-artistic ones can be found in other neighbourhoods where they are drawn so as to convey a specific message in a specific domain like sport, politics, and identity. Sometimes they shadow the inhabitants' daily life.

All in all, graffiti remains an urban way to express oneself either in an artistic or non-artistic way.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we have illustrated different theoretical concepts related to the present study, starting by graffiti; its definition, origins, advantages and disadvantages. Then, we moved to introduce some concepts related to semiology. Finally, we have concluded the chapter by describing Bejaia City which is the case study of our research.

Chapter Two

Research Method, Analysis & Discussion of the Findings

Research Method, Analysis, & Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This second chapter is divided into two sections:

1- Research Methods

2- Analysis & Discussion of the Finding

Section One

Research Methodology

1.1. Research Method

This study falls under the category of descriptive design. It consists of describing and analysing semiotically the corpus gathered from Bejaia city. For this, we have adopted a qualitative method where we used qualitatively a semiotic analysis of the graffiti to provide a comprehensive understanding of our research.

1.2. Corpus of the Study

In order to carry out this present study, we built a corpus made up of thirty graffiti, collected from different quarters of the city of Bejaia such as Targa Ouzemour, Edimco, Cité CNS, La Wilaya, Lacifa, El Batima, Houma Karaman, downtown, Porte Sarrasin, Bourdj Moussa, Dawadji, and l'Ancienne Gare Routière. This limited number of the collected graffiti can be explained by the fact that the majority of the Bougiote graffiti writers express the same ideas through different ways. Some of them are illegible, meaningless, and incomprehensible, while others contain slangs and taboo drawings.

1.3. The Research Procedure

The interview is largely used in research. It helps to explain and explore better the different information obtained.

Cassell and Symon (2004) point out that*: "The qualitative research interview is ideally suited to examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored…"* (p.21)

Our interview is based on six questions administrated to fifteen persons selected randomly from Bejaia City. The participants are chosen from the two different genders to provide different answers from different perceptions and attitudes.

1.4. Data Analysis Procedures

For the sake of valid data collection and applicable convincing analysis so as to test the assumptions provided and accomplish the conducted study, we attempt to use Peirce's theory of signs to analyse semiotically the corpus of our research. The answers gathered from the interview are going to be taken into consideration to explain more the urban environment of the Bougiote Graffiti Writers.

Section Two

Analysis & Discussion of the Findings

The present section reports the different findings and results which are discussed in details. The data obtained from the corpus gathered from Bejaia City and the interview conducted with the participants of this study are analysed and discussed.

2.1. Meanings of Graffiti

Graffiti can be categorized into different spheres depending on the meaning it represents. According to the corpus we have gathered, we can draw four different categories.

2.1.1. Identity Meaning

The graffiti writers tend to use graffiti as a way of marking their territory and affirm their identity and their origins.

Figure 01: G N°1

Figure 02: G N°2

Figure 03: G N°3

Figure 04: G N°4

Figure 05: G N°5

Figure 06: GN°6

Figure 07: G N°7

2.1.2. Political Meaning

Graffiti is considered as a way of sharing a political point of view. They are generally produced during periods of political crisis and even during the election periods.

Figure 08: G N°8

Figure 09: G N°9

Figure 10: G N°10

Figure 11: G N°11

Figure 12: G N°12

Figure 13: G N°13

Figure 14: G N°14

Figure 15: G N°15

Figure 16: G N°16

2.1.3 Sport Meaning

Graffiti is a way of showing love and support to a favourite sport team.

Figure 17: G N°17

Figure 18: G N°18

Figure 19: G N°19

Figure 20: G N°20

2.1.4. Social Meaning

In this part, the messages convey a social theme, in which the graffiti writers express their social insecurity, distress, their hopes in life, citations, proverbs, and pieces of advice...etc.

Figure 21: G N°21

Figure 22: G N°22

Figure 23: G N°23

Figure 24: GN°24

Figure 25: G N°25

Figure 26: G N°26

Figure 27: GN°27

Figure 28: G N°28

Figure 29: GN°29

Figure 30: G N°30

2.2. Semiotic Analysis of Graffiti According to Charles Sanders Peirce

According to notion of sign stated by Charles Sanders Peirce (1931), urban graffiti can be analysed by means of the Triadic Semiotic. The analyses will be at the three levels of the sign; Object, Representamen, and Interpretant.

2.3. The Representamen and the Object of Graffiti

The Bougiote Graffiti writers made from the walls of their city a way of expression and communication of their thoughts and points of view.

The description given in the table below is a part of the representamen and the object of the graffiti. Including the choice of different languages used, signs, spelling, and colours used.

Sphere	Graffiti Number	Graffiti Style	Lge Used	Graph Used	Colours	The Representamen	Description
Identity	G N°1	Piece	Berber	Latin	Black, green, yellow	Text: Masnsen Drawing	In this graffiti we see a man whose name Massinisa drown on white wall. It is coloured with black, green and yellow colour. Next to it, it is written Masnsen.
	G N° 2	Piece			Black	Drawing	This graffiti is a piece of Lounes Matoub drawn in black colour.
	G N°3	Piece			Green, red, white, blue, yellow, black	Drawing	This graffiti is a piece of man who tries to get closer the Amazigh flag to the one of Algeria.
	G N°4	Piece			Black,	Drawing	A piece of a veiled woman

					white		next to her some jewelleries drown in black colour on a white wall.
	G N°5	Piece	French	Latin	Black, yellow	Text: AMAZIGH Drawing	A piece of the Z letter of the Berber language in Tifinagh writing system. It is drawn in black and yellow colours, and followed by AMAZIGH.
	G N°6	Piece			Black, yellow	Drawing	A piece of symbols drawn in black and yellow colours.
	G N°7	Throw-up	English	Latin	Blue, red, green, yellow, black, brown	Text : RESIST TO EXSIST Drawing	In this graffiti we see a hand trying to protect the Amazigh symbol. It is coloured with the Amazigh flag's colours. Next to it, a sentence written in English language.
Political	G N°8	Tag	Arabic	Latin	Blue	Text: CLITO L'BLAD	A text composed of two Arabic words written in Latin. It is written with blue colour on a white wall.
	G N°9	Tag	Arabic, French	Arabic, Latin	Red, black	Text: 1-LAICITÉ, INCH ALLAH 2- لائكية إنشاء الله	A text composed of two sentences; one is written in Arabic the other in French language that is called code mixing. It is written in black

						and red colours on a white wall.
G N°10	Tag	Arabic, French	Arabic	Red	Text: معنديش بروبلام مع الدين ، الهوية، اللغة، عندي بروبلام مع العصبة	A text written in Arabic mixed with one French word in red colour on a white wall.
G N°11	Tag	Arabic, English, French	Arabic, Latin	Blue	Text : تبا لحكومة تبقي أحلام شبابها تحت الوسادة No Futur, Mais Jusqu'à quand…	A text written in three languages: Arabic, English, and French. Written in blue on a white wall.
G N°12	Tag	French	Latin	Black	Text: NUL NE PEUT ARRETER UN PEUPLE SUR LE CHEMIN DE SON DESTIN	A text written in the French language in black on a white wall.
G N°13	Tag and piece	French	Latin	Black, red	Text: QUAND L'INJUSTICE DEVIENT LOI, LA REVOLUTION, EST UN DEVOIR Drawing	A text written in the French language in black and red colours next to the Lakhder Bouregaa's picture.
G N°14	Piece			Blue, white, red, green, black,	Drawing	A hand that takes an insecticide coloured with the Algerian flag's colours and a hand trying to kill a cockroach coloured with

					brown		flag's colours of France.
	G N°15	Piece	French	Latin	Green, white, red, black	Text : MATOUB Drawing	The picture of Lounes Matoub and his family name drawn on the Algerian flag on a white wall.
	G N°16	Piece			Black, white	Drawing	A picture of Che Guevara (Ernesto Guevara) drawn in black on a white wall.
Sport	G N°17	Piece			Black, green, white	Drawing	A piece of three men who are shouting drawn in black, green, and white colours.
	G N°18	Tag	French	Latin	Black	Text : MOB	An acronym written in black on a white wall that stands from **M**ouloudia **O**lympique **B**éjaia In French language.
	G N°19	Piece			Green, white, red, blue, yellow	Text: JEUNESSE PASSIONNÉE JSMB 1936	A sentence written in French langue followed by an acronym which stands from **J**eunesse **S**portive **M**adinet **B**ejaia next to the year of the foundation of this football team. It drawn on decorated wall with green, white, and red colours. We see people shouting behind drawn in blue colour.
	G N°20	Piece	French	Latin	Blue, green, red, white	Text: FERVEUR INFINIE JSMB 1936	A public that support JSMB football team coloured in blue. Next to it, words written the French language.

Social	G N°21	Piece	English	Latin	Black, white, red	Text: no Art NO fun Drawing	A sentence written in English language and a girl who tries to erase a part from it. It is coloured with red, black and white.
	G N°22	Throw-up	Arabic	Arabic	Black, red, green, yellow, blue,	Text: الأمل Drawing	An Arabic word written in black on background made of hearts in different colours.
	G N°23	Tag	French	Latin	Green, white	Text: ici c'est BOUGIE JSMB	A sentence written in French language followed by an acronym. They are written in green and white colours.
	G N°24	Tag	Berber	Latin	Red	Text: ASSIREM AD YILI	A sentence written in Berber language in red colour on a white wall.
	G N°25	Piece	French	Latin	Black, brown	Text: 1-" Vous arriverez un jour quand les mains se réuniront" 2- « L'union fait la force. Si l'union fait la force l'usage de la force mène à la désunion. » Drawing	Two proverbs written in the French language in black. Between them two hands trying to bring two persons together.

	G N°26	Tag	Arabic	Arabic	Black	Text:كل واحد يلتها بهمو Drawing	An Arabic sentence written in black on white wall. Next to, it we see an emoji.
	G N°27	Throw-up	French	Latin	Blue, black, brown, red, yellow, green	Text: RALLUMER NOTRE BOUGIE	A throw-up written in French language in blue. And a little child dressed in red shorts and a green shirt who waters a red rose.
	G N°28	Piece			Black, white, grey, blue	Drawing	A big blue eyed girl coloured in grey drawn on a black background.
	G N°29	Piece	French	Latin	Blue, brown	Text: MARINE Drawing	A set of maritime symbols: an anchor, a brown rope, and a boat helm. Next to It, it is written marine in blue and some stars all around.
	G N°30	Piece	French	Latin	Black, white, red, yellow, green	Text: Protegez Mon Avenir Drawing	A man wearing black clothes and takes a red umbrella to protect his little girl who looks like an angle. Between her hands a heart coloured with Algerian flag's colours. Just next to her, a sentence written in French language.

Table: The Representamen and the Object of Graffiti

2.4. Interpretation of Graffiti

Figure 01: G N°1

The piece above represents Massinissa whose name is derived from Mass-nsen in the Berber language meaning "their Lord". In fact, Massinissa was the first King of Numidia. He is known for his bravery and love for freedom. Berbers consider him as an icon that represents the Berber origin and identity. The graffiti artist drew Massinissa on the wall of his city to show his pride and honour of belonging to Massinissa race. This appears in the way he wrote his name in capitalized letters to attract people's attention. The choice of the colours used is due to the fact that he associated the colours of the football team (MOB) that he supports.

Figure 02: G N°2

This piece represents Matoub Lounes. He is an Algerian-Berber singer and poet born in January 24, 1956, dead in June 25, 1998 in Tizi-O uzou. He reflects the Berber identity as he is considered as a symbol of freedom. He used his singing as weapon to maintain the sustainability of his identity. The choice of the black colour is a way of showing the sadness of the Kabyles because of his death considered as a loss for the Kabyle community.

Figure 03: G N°3

This piece is a message addressed by the artist to say that Algeria is a Berber country and do not belong to any other origin except this one. The meaning of the Algerian flag symbolises as follows: the green colour, the star and crescent represent Islam, the white means peace, and the red is the colour of the martyrs' blood. Whereas for the Amazigh flag the blue colour represents the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, green means nature and the green mountains, yellow is the sands of the Sahara Desert, and the red one symbolizes the "free man" and resistance.

Figure 04: G N°4

This piece reflects some aspects of the Berber culture including the traditional dressing of Chaoui woman (a region among the Berber populations) and some jewellery made of silver. The black colour symbolizes the elegant style of the Chaoui woman. This graffiti is way of being proud of the richness of the Berber culture and a way of letting Kabyle people discover the other sides of the wide origin they belong to.

Figure 05: G N°5

This peace represents the yaz symbol; the Z letter of Tifinagh which is system of writing of the Berber language. It symbolises "the free man". The word Amazigh is written in the capital letters to make it appear and let everyone see it because they are proud of being Amazigh. The black colour symbolises power while the yellow colour is taken from the Amazigh flag.

Figure 06: G N°6

This piece represents a set of Berber signs and some letters of Tifinagh. It is a way of being proud of their language. The yellow colour is taken from the Amazigh flag while the black one symbolizes the power and the elegance of the Berber language.

Figure 07: G N°7

This peace is a way to incite Kabyle and Amazigh people to maintain their origin and do not let it vanish. The colours used are taken from the Amazigh flag. This sign is symbol because it contains the sign of Amazigh.

Figure 08: G N°8

This tag has a political meaning. It is written in a gibberish way meaning that it is written with Latin alphabet but read in the Arabic language. "Clito l'blad" means literally «you have eaten the country" which means "you have stolen the state treasury". This statement is composed of two words but has a deep meaning. In fact, it is a message addressed directly by a citizen to the government to accuse them of being corrupted and considered them as thieves. It is a way to raise citizens' attention and make them aware of the country's mismanagement. The graffiti is taken from Bejaia city which is a coastal city this is why it is written in blue. We don't see the artist name under the drawing because freedom of speech is limited   in Algeria. He could be punished by Algerian laws.

Figure 09: G N°9

This tag is composed of two expressions written in both French and Arabic languages Meaning "Laicity, God willing". It is a kind of hope from the artist to build a secular state far away from religious restrictions. It seems that the artist is a bilingual person this appears when he mixed between two different languages. He used the black colour because it is technical colour used by artists while the red one symbolizes the desire of the graffiti writer to change the actual situation of the country. He chose the red colour and big writing for the French language rather than the Arabic one because many citizens are influenced by French culture more than the Arabic one. This state of fact is due to historical reasons which gave to the French language an important place in the Algerian linguistic landscape.

Figure 10: G N°10

In the tag above, the graffiti writer shows his anger toward the ones who want to divert the causes of his protest by claiming: "I have no problem with religion, identity, or with language. I have a problem with gangs." We understand that he compared the corrupted government of his country to gangs. The tag is written in colloquial Arabic meaning the Algerian Arabic mixed with a French word. It is written in red colour to show that his is saying the truth, as he seems to be courageous because he denounced the state of his country without any fear from being punished by the Algerian law.

Figure 11: G N°11

This tag describes to us the situation in which the Bougiote citizens are living. It is written literally speaking: "Damn the government keeps the dreams of its youth under the pillow. No future, but until when…" We read in these three lines a kind of despair and being fed up with the way they are living. It shows hatred toward the government that he considered as the first factor of being in such situation. The blue colour symbolises the truth of what he is claiming and a kind of hope maybe the authorities will be sensitized by such a saying and try to give them opportunities to realise their dreams.

Figure 12: G N°12

"No one can stop a people on the path of his destiny" this tag shows the determination of the graffiti writer to wrest his independence. It is a way of encouraging others to join him. The black colour symbolises the power of people once they decide to choose their destiny and nothing will stop them. The tag is written with big letter in order to attract the passengers and motivate them.

Figure 13: G N°13

This sign represents Matoub Lounes; the symbol of freedom in Kabylia. The background of the drawing is the Algerian flag. In fact, this singer has defended not only the Amazigh cause but also the Algerian one. He was someone who loved his country. He was always against the Algerian regime this can be understood in his last song just before his assassination entitled "Monsieur le Président" meaning Mister the President. It was like an addressed speech to the president of Algeria to express his anger for the fact that they did not let him feel that he belonged to his country. They always considered him as a thug and insurgent. He was a man of principle he said:" I am of the warrior race. They can kill me but they will never silence me. I prefer to die for my ideas than to die of weariness and old age." He is known for his political engagement, his talent, his music, his poetry, and his outspoken. He has a great place in the hearts of those who have the chance to understand his songs. The graffiti artist is proud of this man. He used black colour to express sadness because of his loss.

Figure 14: G N°14

This piece shows the writer's pride of his country. He described how his ancestors were able to get the French out of their land. He compared France to an insect and Algeria to an insecticide. It shows us the power of Algeria during the revolutionary war ended by snatching their freedom and kicked out the enemy. Despite its liberation in 1962, France stills intervene and control its decisions and target her goods like gas and petroleum. The cockroach is associated with disorder and dirt which signifies unhappiness. The artist engaged hunting these insects. In other words, a liberation struggle against France and for the creation of a democratic and popular Algerian state.

Figure 15: G N°15

"When injustice becomes law, revolution is a duty. " This may be an inspiration for a better life, better world, and new beginning. The revolution is nothing but a thought carried into action by the youth, who inherited the current state of the nation. This statement is used by Thomas Jefferson; the third president of the United States of America. In the declaration of the independence of USA in 1776.The graffiti writer made a link between this citation and Lakhder Bouragaa; an Algerian Liberation War fighter, a politician, and an important figure in the Hirak that was arrested and jailed. He emphasized on the word "revolution" since it became a need to wrest their independence and defend freedom of speech which is an absolute right. He supported this cause and invited other members to join the Hirak movement which is a kind of peaceful revolution to free Bouragaa and all the Algerian prisoners of conscience.

Figure 16: G N°16

The icon of Che Guevara symbolizes struggle, revolution, and freedom. Indeed, he is a politician from Latin America, a friend and right- hand man of Fidel Castro at the heart of the revolution. He was a man of conviction and a lover of justice and freedom. He had preferred to fight for the freedom of the oppressed and to fight difficult causes than to bathe in wealth and luxury. Among his sayings: "I would rather die standing up to live life on my knees." The graffiti writer draw this sign because he is touched and influenced by this great leader, a legend that never dies in the hearts of the oppressed. The black colour symbolises the power of Che Guevara as a great leader of justice at the same time the peoples' grief especially the oppressed ones due to its loss.

Figure 17: G N°17   **Figure 18:** GN°18

Bougiote like all the Algerian people admire football and support their two local clubs: **MOB** (**M**ouloudiat **O**lympique **B**ejaia) and **JSMB** (**J**eunesse **S**portif **M**adinat **B**ejaia). This explains the raisons why graffiti that carry a sport meaning spread in the majority of Bejaia's streets. Thus, graffiti is one of the ways that graffiti artists choose to convey a certain identity either by sport clubs slogans or their colour. This can be seen in these pictures above.

The two figures are a kind of support from the artist to MOB. This football club was created in 1954 in Bejaia. The piece (G N°17) represents the supporters of MOB's players. They are shouting or singing louder in order to encourage them. Black and green are the colours of the MOB Club, while the green is taken from the Amazigh flag, the black colour symbolises the unhappiness of Kabylia because of the death of members of their community. It is resulted from some sad events they went through such as the events of the May 8, 1954 massacres in Kherrata (Bejaia). In the (G N°18) we observe a tag where the writer is proud of his favourite football team. It is an index because passengers may notice how the writer is affectionate to this football team.

Figure 19: G N°19   **Figure 20:** GN°20

The two figures above are pieces that are considered as a support from the artists to JSMB. This Algerian football club was founded in 1936. Green and red are the colours of the club taken from the Amazigh flag since it is Kabyle football club while the blue colour symbolises love and the trust they made on the club. We can see this love in the two phrases

written in French meaning Bougiote youths are passionate and show the infinite fervour they have toward their favourite football team.

Figure 21: G N°21

The graffiti writer confesses the importance of art in general and the graffiti art in particular. Art is part of one's culture, so it should be given importance by people too. It is a way of expressing and sharing one's skills with others. It makes people happy, excited, and powerful. The artist is encouraging others to share their skills because this will help them to be funny and enjoy what they are doing. He is relating the fact of being funny to art that is why the girl in the drawing tries to remove the "no fun". He wants to see others happy and enjoy their lives.

Figure 22: G N°22

This tag is an index that leads us to think about the artist's pride of being a Bougiote citizen. This appears in what he wrote "Here is Bougie" or Bejaia. "Ici" or here is a reference to the city of the artist. He wants to show that the inhabitants of this city are always proud and faithful to JSMB.

Figure 23: G N°23   **Figure 24:** GN°24

These two graffiti share the same meaning which is hopefulness. "Hope" in the (G N°23) is written in standard Arabic and "Hope will be" in the (G N°24) is written in Berber language. It is a kind of making hope in the hearts of the citizens to carry on what they have started and never give up. These graffiti were drawn during the Hirak period to encourage one another in or order achieve their goals which they came out for. They should resist and keep being peaceful. They wish they could build not only a city but a country full of happiness, love, joy, security, and power.

Figure 25: G N°25

The above graffiti carries two messages "Unity makes strength. If unity makes strength the use of force will lead to disunity" and "You will arrive one day when the hands come together". These proverbs are used to emphasize the need to remain united to reach our goal. It is by allying and combining our strengths that we can overcome our problems in life. This graffiti was drawn during the Hirak period to incite others to keep being unified but one should not force others in taking decision on what they have to do. They should outreach and try to convince others without forcing them; that is to say, they should not force citizens to go out on the street and participate in the walk, but to free awareness which is the objective of the Hirak. They should proceed step by step to be able to make all the citizens conscious and fight all together to reach their objectives. The artist is telling citizens to remain peaceful and not use force because it will destroy all what they have built from the begging.

Figure 26: G N°26

"Let everyone minds his own business" is the tag that the graffiti writer has used to describe the mentality of his region. It seems that he is fed up with this situation where people are spying for others life and commenting on everything. We understand that he felt embarrassed in a particular situation in his life that led him to express his anger and unhappiness on the wall. This sign is both an index and an icon. First, the writing conveys a particular message. Second, we can notice the presence of an icon just below the writing.

Figure 27: G N° 27

"Relight our candle" is a throw-up graffiti where the writer tries to address a particular message concerning the property of Bejaia city. "Candle" is a name given to Bejaia. In fact it is an advice to the citizens of the city in order to incite people to rebuild their city and restore its value as before. In other words Bejaia is a city of history and civilization which has a glorious past, a city that has gathered scholars such as Ibn Khaldoun. This city fought against the Romans, the Spanish, and the French. The famous Kabyle singer Cherif Khedam sang about this city saying that: "Béjaia is beautiful, it is the soul of Kabylia." The blue colour symbolises the Mediterranean Sea, as it symbolises hope of rebuilding the same city as it was in the past. According to the choice of the colours we understand that the artist supports the JSMB football team considered as a sport identity.

Figure 28: G N°28

This piece represents a little poor girl. According to her face, she seems to be very sad and miserable. She is someone who survived a war, but has lost members of her family or someone of her relatives. She let us think about the Syrian refugees in Algeria and all the refugees in the world. We can read in her big eyes loneliness but at the same time she seems to be hopeful. She is waiting for help and support for their cause. The aim behind this piece is to denounce the state of countries living in civil wars. It is a message addressed to the Algerian citizens in general and the Bougiote ones in particular though they are living in bad conditions in their country, before acting they should think first about the consequences. They should remain peaceful to reach their goals. Otherwise they will be in the same case like this little girl.

Figure 29: G N°29

This graffiti is a sign of an anchor which is the icon of sailors and fishermen. Indeed, it is a symbol for those who work in navy signifying firmness and stability. As it can symbolize the union of: Relatives, friends, people who love each other, and also members of the community. It indicates that the city has a view to the sea, in the case of this artist it is the Mediterranean Sea. So, in this graffiti we observe all the marine tools such as: the anchor, a rope, and a boat helm. This piece tells us that the graffiti artist is Muslim due to the presence of the Stars, which symbolizes Islam with its five fundamental pillars. The colour blue symbolizes the sea and Bejaia is a coastal town. The sign H refers to the graffiti artist's nickname. The graffiti artist may work in the marine domain, or admires this atmosphere, this is why he wants to share his knowledge of the marine world with the other members of his community.

Figure 30: G N°30

Parents are the source of power for their children. It is their responsibility to encourage, educate, and help their children in their daily life activities so as to develop good behaviours. The future of the country depends on children of today. They are like a clean shit, innocent, and full of energy that parents should take profit. They are afraid of having the same future as the one of the adults of now this is the meaning of "save my future".

2.5. Stylistic Analysis of Graffiti

In order to make the texts more aesthetic, expressive, and attractive, the Bougiote graffiti writers tend to use:

2.5.1. Figures of Speech:

2.5.1.1. Metaphor

Graffiti number	Tenor	Common ground	Vehicle
G N°8	Country	Eatable	Food
G N°10	The corrupted government	/	Gangs
G N°11	Dreams	keeping	Object
G N°12	Hope	/	Concrete thing

2.5.1.2. Paradox

(GN°9) The Arabic expression Inchallah (Gods willing) is used by Muslims. This means that the graffiti artist is a Muslim. on the other hand, he/she claimed a secular state.

Laicity is a forbidden concept in Islam. Islam religion is more than an individual belief but also a way of living. The Quran is considered as guide of life that must be applied in all fields. In other words, a Muslim should apply the features of the Islamic religion otherwise it is a sin.

2.5.1.3. Rhetoric

In (G N°11) mais jusqu'à quand (but until when) the artist seems to be fed up with situation of his country where the government did not provide him opportunities to let him realize his dreams. He is disappointed and knows that it will never change. So the question he asked is not a real question since he already knows the answer.

2.5.1.4. Metonymy

In (G N°27), Bejaia is replaced by Bougie "candle". In fact, this name was given to this city because it was known for the quality of its candles made of beeswax.

2.5.1.5. Anaphora

The repetition of the first part of these two expressions in (G N°21) **No** art, **No** fun.

2.6. Literary Devices

2.6.1. Consonance

In (G N°7) Resis**t** to Exis**t**.

2.6.2. Acronyms

- **MOB** in (G N°18) stands from **M**ouloudia **O**lympique **B**éjaia.
- **JSMB** in (G N°19), (G N°20), and (G N°23) stands from **J**eunesse **S**portive **M**adinet **B**éjaia.

2.7. The Dominant Languages on Bejaia City's Walls

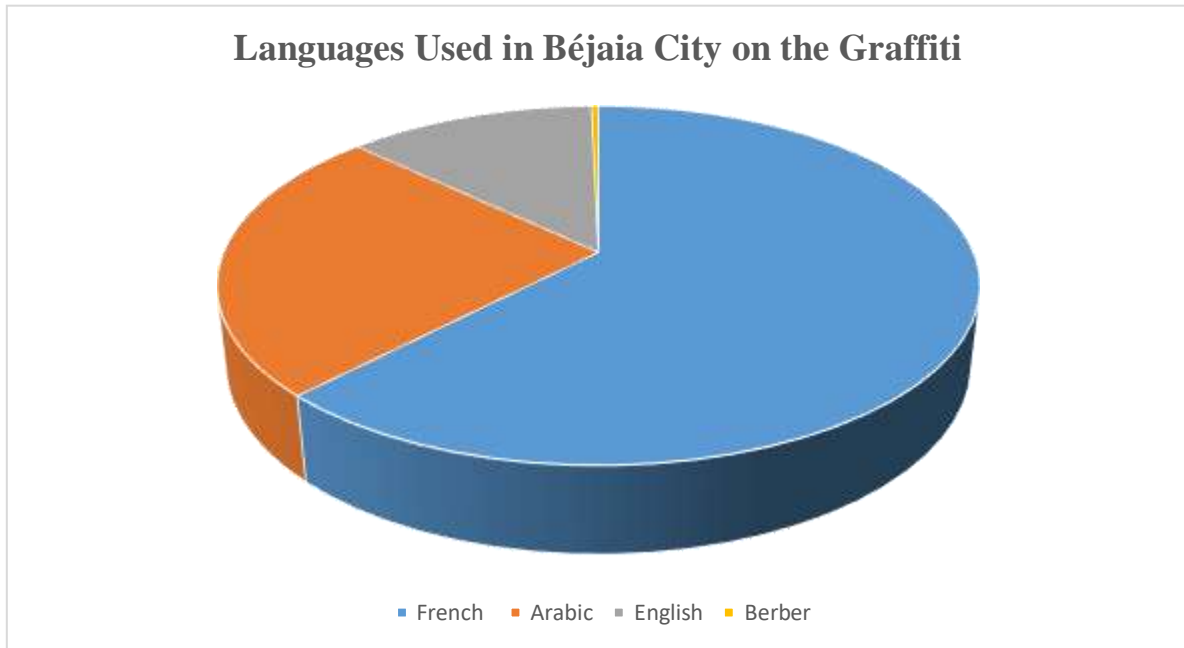Four languages are mainly present on the walls of Bejaia:

Figure 31: The Use of Languages in Bejaia City according to the Corpus Gathered

2.7.1. French Language

Graffiti artists tend to use French in most of their work. This is explained by the French colonization which lasted 130 years in Algeria. This leads to the influence of French language and culture on the Algerian people.

French holds an important place in Algeria since it is the first foreign language of the country and it is used in educational and official settings. The opening to the modern world was made by French. It holds an important place in Algeria. (Grandguillaume, 2004).

2.7.2. Arabic Language

Graffiti writers in Bejaia tend to use the Arabic language in their graffiti as it is the first national and official language in Algeria. The use of Arabic in Algeria witnesses the Islamic conquest during the medieval era since Arabic language is the language of the Quran.

In fact, modern standard Arabic (MSA) is largely used in official administrations, media, schools, universities, and workplaces. It is the fundamental element in the Algerian national identity.

However, Algerian Arabic, also known as Darja; is an ordinary language (spoken language) used in daily communication. It is partially mutually intelligible with Tunisia and Morocco.

2.7.3. English Language

From lexical point of view, English language is an Indo-European language. It is the official language of Britain and United States and most of the commonwealth countries. It is the language of science, business, and technology; thus, it is considered as a lingua franca between two different speakers.

It is less used by graffiti writers in Bejaia since Algeria was colonized by France. English language is only taught in school as a foreign language, so Algerians have limited access to quality English.

2.7.4. Berber Language

Bougiote graffiti writers tend to use Berber language which is their mother tongue besides the Arabic Bougiote dialect to produce their graffiti. Meanwhile, the limited number of works done in Tamazight can be explained by reasons related to politics.

The Colonel and President of the Republic Houari Boumdiene was one of the authoritarian socialists of the country. His regime required companions who incited the Arabization of the country for a "New Algeria" after the independence of Algeria to maintain the Arabic language and the Islamic religion. Boumdiene therefore decided to make from Arabic the only language of the country without taking into account the Amazigh one. He applied it in all sectors such as education. The Arabization policy created deep tensions among the population. In 1976, it was the Arabization of billboards with street names and license plates. The Amazigh of the country were against this policy because their identity and language were in danger of disappearing. Their resistance was expressed in the exclusive use of Amazigh and French in all public places. Boumdiene decided to ban the Amazigh language in the country and punish everyone who used it. (Mezdad, 2009).

All these factors made from the Berber language an oral rather than a written language until the late 90s. But still, they write in Latin rather than in Tifinagh graphic. They found difficulties in the syntax and lexis of the language this lead them to make from French a spare language. (Mahrouche, 2013).

2.8.Interview Analysis

Item 01: What do you think about graffiti?

All the interviewed participants agreed that graffiti is a universal street art used as a way of expressing thoughts, points of view, and emotions in public areas. In addition, it adds a charm to the city with its different colours. It attracts people's attention through symbols, drawings or pictures on walls. Moreover, it offers opportunities to those who want to let their voice be heard.

From the above interpretation, all the participants perceive graffiti as a means of expression in a society.

Item 02: According to you, why does graffiti spread in Bejaia?

Most of the participants agreed that political crisis especially the Hirak movement are the main reasons behind the spreading of graffiti in Bejaia. They made from the walls a way of raising people's attention. In addition to this, freedom of speech is somehow restricted in their country so the walls are the only way to spread their messages and let their opinions be heard. For others, it is a way of expressing the sport and origin identity. They want to make their city beautiful and attractive as they want to show their art.

According to results of the above analysis, there are different reasons behind the spreading of graffiti in Bejaia but the main one is because of political problem in the country. The graffiti writers found only walls to share their political views and opinions.

Item 03: In which field does graffiti launch more in Bejaia?

Most of the participants asserted that there is a great diversity of fields where graffiti is used, much more in the political one since most graffiti paintings are related to politics and the corrupted system they are living under, and that they use this art in order to show the viewer the harsh reality hidden behind the fake news being spread by the media. Then, the field of sport, there is a great rivalry between the two Bougiote clubs; thus, showing in an innovative way that one is better than the other.

From the above interpretations, graffiti are launched in different domains but the most common one is politics then sport.

Item 04: Do you think that it reflects the Algerian society, how?

All the participants agreed that graffiti of Bejaia reflect the Algerian society. First, it gives an idea about what are the young people problems, concerns, dreams and obstacles. Second, the drawings and writings speak notably of the problems that exists in the Algerian society such women's rights, freedom of expressing oneself, and many other facts about daily life of an ordinary Algerian citizen. Finally, it reflects vividly the Algerian society since it's one of the means through which the Algerian youth can find the outlet for expressing their feelings and needs since most of the graffiti explains political, ethnic and social issues of the Algerian society.

To conclude, graffiti reflects the Algerian society since it shows what is really happening and what Algerian citizens face in their everyday lives. The Bougiote artists speak their hearts out through these drawings which unveil the truth that the media chooses not to speak of.

Item 05: How does graffiti influence people's thinking?

Most of the participants agreed that graffiti influence positively people's thinking. First, it is a way of making people think deeply and admire art at the same time. Second, it informs and raises people's awareness. Seeing all the graffiti works out in the streets makes people think about them and uncover some things hidden from them or maybe they did not realise before. Thus, it can influence their thinking and alter their judgements. Third, the mixing colours, the humoristic and astonishing drawings, its uniqueness since it is drawn on walls make the city beautiful and attractive. But for others, graffiti can shape up criminals with its radical ideas written on the walls.

From the above analysis, graffiti is a double sword edge. It can affect people thinking positively when it contains a good message like providing pieces of advice, citations, proverbs, or providing information. However, as it can affect them negatively when it deals with gangs, slangs, and taboo drawings and writings.

Item 06: Do you consider it as an art or vandalism, why?

The majority of the participants viewed graffiti as art because it is a creative art where each creation made from inscription or painting tells a story and transmits an important message; and aesthetically speaking, it is rather pretty and that does no ma jor damage.

However, it depends on the places where it is drawn because it must respect the property if it is a public property and adequate for a graffiti. But for others, it is seen as vandalism when it is non-artistic and includes taboo words. It influences badly on people's education mainly when it touches someone's dignity. Besides, it is a bad behaviour when it pollutes public places with pictures or expressions that can be unacceptable. In fact, it is a crime and it incites to hatred and violence.

In sum, graffiti is an art because it is a hidden talent that can explore many ideas in different ways. It gives a chance to every one of us to express personal opinions about our ideologies, thoughts, religion, political issues…

However, it is vandalism when it does not respect the others property and incite others to bad things.

Conclusion

From our investigation, we can draw some conclusions related to each part treated in this chapter that are summarized as follows:

First, the Bougiote graffiti writers made from the walls of their city a way to share their implication in their society in different domains. Accordingly, the graffiti gathered in Bejaia treat many subjects. Thus, they are categorised into four main spheres: identity, politics, sport, and social ones.

Second, we could successfully apply Peirce Theory Model in the analysis. Thus, it is relevant and pertinent for such studies.

Third, In Bejaia, graffiti are produced in different languages. The linguistic diversity on the walls of the city of Bejaia leads to summarise the existence of multilingualism. Among its consequences, the use of code mixing. In other words, the Bougiote graffiti writers tend to mix between different languages in the same graffiti.

Fourth, the Algerian identity is reflected in most of the graffiti. The Bougiote artists share their origins and identity in different works, some political issues they are going through, they showed support to their two football clubs teams, and some works related to their social reality.

Fifth, graffiti are done in both ways artistically and non-artistically. Thus, some participants of this research considered graffiti as art while others viewed it as a crime.

General Conclusion

1.General conclusion

The present study has investigated the semiotic analysis of urban graffiti of Bejaia city. Accordingly, the research is based on four assumptions. First, Berber, Arabic, French, and, English are the main languages used on graffiti in Bejaia City. Second, identity, politics, sport, and some issues related to the social life are the main meanings of the graffiti. Third, most of the graffiti reflect the Algerian identity and the social reality. Finally, graffiti are drawn in both perspectives .i.e., artistically and non-artistically. Furthermore, The main purpose behind conducting this study is to identify, analyse, describe, and explain the meaning behind some selected graffiti found in Bejaia City.

This research paper is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical background in which an explanation of the different variables of the study is provided all along with the three sections dealing with introducing graffiti, introduc ing semiology, and at last the description of Bejaia City. The second chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research divided into three sections dealing with research methods, analysis, and discussion of the findings, in addition to some pedagogical implications and recommendation for future research. Finally, this work is concluded with a general conclusion summarizing the whole process of the investigation.

In the present study a total number of 30 signs were analysed. The signs consist of some collected graffiti from Bejaia City. The data were collected from two main research tools: photography and interview. The graffiti were analysed according to Peirce's Theory of Signs. In addition to 15 interviews where the interviewees were selected randomly from different ages and genders from Bejaia City. Moreover, a qualitative method was adopted where we used a semiotic analysis of the graffiti to evaluate the validity of the suggested assumptions and provide relevant answers to research questions.

The interviewees' answers revealed that graffiti is a universal urban street art which is considered as a means of expression that spread in Bejaia City especially due to political crisis. It reflects vividly the Algerian society since Algerian youngsters turn to graffiti so as to express their feelings, thoughts, and problems faced in life. Besides, most of the participants agreed on the positive influence of graffiti on people's thinking and consider it as an art. Whereas, others think that it influences negatively people's thinking especially when it deals with gangs and taboo subject, so they consider it as vandalism.

Finally, further research were suggested to conduct either in the topic of graffiti or in the domain of semiotics to push the future researchers to work more and develop these fields.

2.Limitations of the Study

Across the present study, we have encountered some hardships which hindered, to some extent, its completion in the proper way.

First, lack of resources and literature dealing with the different variables of the research for both semiotics and graffiti. Therefore, this lead us to use more online database resources.

Second, the interviewees' points of view compared to the population of Bejaia City are not enough to generalise others opinions about graffiti.

Third, the current situation with the measures of lockdown and distancing of pedagogical activities has prevented us from doing face-to-face supervision sessions. And working via internet and some technical problems lead us to some misunderstandings.

3.Suggestions for Further Research

In the present study, we have tried to analyse semiotically some of the urban graffiti found in Bejaia City. Further studies can be applied on other phenomena. Thus, the follow ing suggestions are addressed to future researchers:

- The impact of graffiti on citizen's attitudes.
- The semiotic landscapes study of Bejaia.
- The semiotic analyses of Algerian brands.
- The semiotic analyses of the Hirak slogans.
- Comparative analyses of Algerian newspaper caricatures.

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   %D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-
   %D8%A8%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-
   %D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%B9-
   %D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%85%D9%86-
   %D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7.html

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   %D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-
   %D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-
   %D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%B6%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AF-
   %D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A1

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   f+jus&gs_l=psy-ab.3.0.33i22i29i30.34646.36969..38552. 0.0..0.1263.5435.5-
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Appendices

Appendix N°01: Samples of the Captured Photographs

JEUNESSE PASSIONNÉE

FERVEUR INFINIE
JSMB 1936

no Art NO FUN

l'union c'est la force

ici c'est BOUGI
SMB

ASSIREM AD YILI

كل واحد يلبس بروحو

MARINE

Appendix N°02 : Interview

This interview is part of a study in the master programme, option linguistics that would be conducted at the department of English at the University of Bejaia. It investigates the semiotic analysis of urban graffiti the case study of Bejaia City. We promise that the data to be collected from this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

We would be very thankful if you could answer to the following questions.

The Researchers,

The Questions: would you like to answer the following questions appropriately

Graffiti is a means of communication that provide people opportunities to produce anonymous texts. So graffiti is considered as anonymous tool to communicate for people who look for a medium to reveal and manifest certain feelings, ideas, opinions, and discourses that are more or less forbidden (Rodriguez and Clair, 2003).

1) What do you know about graffiti?

2) According to you, why does graffiti spread in Bejaia?

3) Which field does graffiti launch more in Bejaia?

4) Do you think that it reflects the Algerian society, how?

5) How does graffiti influence people's thinking?

6) Do you consider it as an art or vandalism, why?

Thank you for your contribution.

Résumé

La présente étude a pour objectif principal l'analyse sémiotique de certains graffitis urbains collectés dans la ville de Bejaia. Elle vise à identifier, analyser, décrire et expliquer la signification de chaque graffiti. Pour cette raison, un total de trente graffitis a été collecté dans différents quartiers de la ville de Bejaia pour servir de corpus pour cette étude. De plus, quinze interviews ont été menées au hasard avec des citoyens Bougiotes. S'appuyant sur la théorie sémiotique triadique de Charles Sanders Peirce, le corpus a été classé selon sa signification. La recherche a adopté une méthode qualitative où nous avons utilisé une analyse sémiotique des graffitis afin de présenter une compréhension globale de notre étude. Les résultats obtenus dans cette étude révèlent que le Berbère, l'Arabe, le Français et l'Anglais sont les principales langues utilisées sur les graffitis dans la ville de Bejaia. En outre, la plupart des graffitis reflètent l'identité algérienne et la réalité sociale vu les significations principales du graffiti sont: l'identité, la politique, le sport et les problèmes de la vie quotidienne. Enfin, les graffitis sont dessinés dans les deux perspectives, c'est-à-dire, artistiquement et non artistiquement.

Mots clés: Graffiti Urbain, Sémiotique, Ville de Bejaia, la théorie sémiotique triadique de Charles Sanders Peirce.