



Classroom Wall Graffiti as a Voice Tool: The Lebanese University as a Case Study

Ibrahim Srour

Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, English Department, Lebanese University, Lebanon

*Correspondence: srouribrahim@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: Language carried within it one's affective notions, psychological struggles, and cognitive abilities. These were expressed through emotions, thoughts, and opinions that reflected one's social role and status. In this way, language served as a vital tool for communication at the social, institutional, and interpersonal levels. Among its many forms was graffiti. Graffiti represented a form of communication that allowed writers to express their thoughts and feelings freely. This article was based on the premise that classroom wall graffiti played a significant role in voicing the opinions, emotions, and ideologies of their writers. It examined the classroom graffiti written by students at the Lebanese University's English Department, Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The aim was to highlight the cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal features of the students' graffiti in order to demonstrate its effectiveness in expressing their voices. The findings showed that classroom graffiti by these students functioned as a powerful discursive social practice, enabling them to articulate the thoughts and emotions that weighed on their minds.

KEYWORDS: Cognition; experiential meaning; voice; CODA; SFL

1. Introduction

Language was a vital component of human connection, playing a crucial role in both socialization and communication. In this context, the four primary language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) were essential for individuals to function effectively within social groups. A person's ability to navigate various roles in society was shaped by their competence in these skills, which determined their success in communication. These skills, enhanced through education and social development, enabled individuals to express their thoughts, opinions, and internal emotions whether cognitive or emotional in various ways, with writing being the most common. In their discussion of language's flexibility, [1] characterized language as having fluid boundaries that allowed users to express their ideas and psychological states. Due to this adaptability, many social groups used language as a unifying tool to achieve shared goals. Similarly, [2] argued that language reflected mental processes and cognitive patterns, making it an expression of human intellect. Understanding language cognition, therefore, required attention to context, including the social, psychological, and physical environment in which language was used.

The present study viewed language as deeply embedded in social and cultural institutions. It argued that comprehension of language function depended on context. Thus, when analyzing any form of communication, whether spoken, written, read, or heard, analysts needed to consider both the context of the situation and the events and conditions that gave rise to the expression.

Since writing was one of the most prominent forms of expression alongside speaking, [3] demonstrated that linguistic analysis of graffiti revealed both form and function, with researchers focusing on recurring grammatical structures. Likewise, [4] emphasized that graffiti discourse reflected societal issues, as such writings encompassed a range of themes and ideologies that represented collective consciousness. As such, studies of graffiti also captured the social conditions of the communities that produced them.

Graffiti served as a form of communication that allowed individuals to express themselves freely, often bypassing conventional norms that restricted written expression. According to [5], graffiti offered insights into the writers and their communities. A wide variety of topics, including guidance, despair, romance, and social issues, could be found in wall inscriptions. Since students often expressed their views on classroom walls, [6] suggested that classroom graffiti reflected the social, cultural, and psychological conditions of those who created it.

In addition, [7] described graffiti as a form of “transgressive global art”, a crucial mode of free expression used to subvert authority and give voice to alternative perspectives. This discursive and semiotic medium allowed marginalized communities to be seen in a broader sociopolitical context. Participants in public defiance were often protected by the anonymity graffiti afforded. Both [8] and [9] emphasized that graffiti was a significant form of transgressive discourse, enhancing the study of linguistic and semiotic environments.

The central aim of this study was to analyze classroom wall graffiti within the Lebanese context, particularly as created by students at the Lebanese University. The goal was to explore the intersection of cognition and ideology as revealed through linguistic expression. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the surrounding context and the circumstances that gave rise to the graffiti. A cognitive analysis provided valuable insight into the behavioral, psychological, and ideological dimensions of the graffiti writers.

This introduction also aimed to provide an overview of key prior research relevant to the topic. The following literature review outlined previous studies on graffiti in general, with a focus on classroom and desk graffiti. It traced developments from studies conducted outside the Arab world to those focused on classroom graffiti in Arab regions. In these works, scholars treated graffiti as an educational, discursive, communicative, ideological, and political tool, used either to challenge social norms and stereotypes or to voice specific ideologies and identities

1.1. Recent graffiti studies outside the Arab world.

Many researchers examined graffiti from various perspectives. Some conducted multimodal analyses, others applied Critical Discourse Analysis, while some utilized Corpus Linguistics. A few approached graffiti from sociolinguistic and ideological standpoints. According to [10], linguistic landscapes are spaces where minority languages struggle for visibility and survival in communicative contexts. This study focused on Asturias, a region in Spain where Asturian, a minority language, faced significant challenges in institutional and educational settings, while

Spanish remained dominant. The research investigated graffiti in the Asturian Mining Valley, an area undergoing revitalization after the decline of the mining industry. Using a qualitative approach, the study aimed to examine how graffiti employed written language, symbols, and spatial organization to construct meaning and express identities, ideologies, and power dynamics associated with urban transformation. The findings revealed that the linguistic landscape of the region displayed diverse layers of meaning tied to identity negotiation, representation, and social consciousness. These included themes such as feminist advocacy, antifascism, global movements, workers' rights, and responses to mining reconversion. Thus, the study provided insight into the social transformation and ideological tensions within these communities.

In another study, [11] analyzed street graffiti to determine how its verbal and visual elements contributed to a multimodal portrayal of the Indonesian police and to the construction of ideology. The researchers employed a Multimodal Discourse Analysis within a descriptive qualitative framework. Since the original graffiti had been removed from public spaces, data were gathered online and consisted of documented virtual images and text. The study applied Halliday's Ideational Metafunctions and Kress and van Leeuwen's Representational Metafunctions. Through textual and visual analysis, the findings showed that the graffiti conveyed the perception that the Indonesian police were corrupt, aggressive toward the public, and intolerant of criticism. The authors concluded that the analyzed graffiti reflected the ideological stance of the artists toward the police.

[12] explored the communicative power of graffiti, emphasizing the use of both verbal and visual elements. Their research examined graffiti in government schools across southern Punjab, gathering data between January and June 2023. They applied [13]'s Semiological Discourse Analysis model and [14]'s Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The results indicated that graffiti served as a persuasive form of communication, effectively delivering ideological messages to specific audiences. A significant portion of the graffiti focused on promoting female education, with 80 percent of the discourse advocating for girls' education compared to 75 percent for boys'. The findings highlighted a noticeable shift in how both rural and urban schools used graffiti to support educational development, particularly for girls.

[15] examined campus graffiti in China, framing it as a form of marginal discourse essential to identity formation. Graffiti research in China had often been overlooked, partly due to cultural perceptions of it as a negative practice. The study analyzed 391 verbal and visual graffiti samples collected from a Chinese university. It focused on identity construction strategies and thematic content. The findings showed that campus graffiti demonstrated countercultural, informal, and anonymity features. The language and symbols used in the graffiti included metaphors, textual and visual signs, and interactive or non-interactive messaging. These expressions highlighted the role of cultural, social, and creative identities in the construction of self. The study also suggested methods for managing graffiti on campuses, emphasizing the importance of inclusive practices, identity reconstruction, and the equitable distribution of discourse power as ways to transform disorder into structured expression.

[16] contributed to a relatively understudied area by analyzing graffiti in a gym setting. The study aimed to understand the purposes behind gym graffiti and to examine discursive practices within that context. Using [14]'s model, which treated language as social practice through a three-dimensional analysis of action, representation, and identification, the research focused exclusively on textual elements, omitting non-verbal aspects. The findings showed that

gym patrons used graffiti to engage with one another, either directly or indirectly, creating a space for interaction and commentary within the gym environment.

1.2. Recent graffiti studies by Arab scholars.

Similar to [16], [17] also applied Critical Discourse Analysis to examine graffiti found on the walls and desks of Jordanian secondary school classrooms. During the second semester of the 2020–2021 academic year, [17] investigated the thematic implications of graffiti inscribed in public secondary schools within the Directorate of Education for the Qasabat Irbid District. The dataset comprised 207 written graffiti samples collected from various locations. The data were analyzed both thematically and linguistically using the Critical Discourse Analysis framework of [18] and the Thematic Analysis approach of [19]. The study's findings revealed that the graffiti content could be categorized into three major communicative themes: political, sentimental, and theological. Each category was further divided into sub-themes. The emotive discourse theme accounted for the largest proportion, representing half of the collected data. The graffiti were characterized by simple lexical choices, yet they effectively conveyed complete and coherent ideas. Moreover, the study utilized graffiti analysis to identify languages and dialectal variations present within the inscriptions.

[20] also examined graffiti within the context of Jordanian educational institutions; however, their study used a corpus-based approach to analyze graffiti found on the walls of Jordanian universities. The research explored how higher education institutions provided a platform for students to express their opinions and ideas. This analysis focused on the communicative features and content of graffiti found in classrooms, corridors, and restrooms, and explored their connection to the sociocultural values of the community. The study also highlighted the linguistic features of these texts. Graffiti collected from the Hashemite University and the University of Jordan were coded and analyzed using [14]'s Critical Discourse Analysis and [19]'s Thematic Content Analysis. The results showed that graffiti served multiple expressive functions, addressing themes such as taboo, politics, religion, social issues, nationalism, and personal matters. The authors concluded that graffiti represent a unique and silent form of communication within academic settings. They argued that the study holds value for linguists, sociologists, educators, administrators, teachers, and parents, as it contributes to the growing body of linguistic research focused on graffiti.

These studies demonstrate that graffiti have been analyzed using a variety of methodologies, including Critical Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Linguistic Landscape analysis, and Semiology. The novelty of the present article is twofold. First, none of the aforementioned studies examined classroom wall graffiti within the Lebanese context. Second, none applied cognitive theory to the analysis of classroom graffiti. This identified gap highlights the need for a new analytical perspective. Motivated by this, the researcher conducted a cognitive and transitivity system analysis of selected classroom wall graffiti written by university students in Lebanon. These aspects distinguish the current study from prior research in the field.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology adopted in this paper was qualitative and descriptive in nature. According to [21], any research approach that aims to understand and interpret human experiences and actions falls under the category of qualitative research. Accordingly, this study employed

Cognitive Discourse Analysis (CODA) [22] and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) [23] as the primary analytical frameworks for analyzing the students' classroom wall graffiti. The author believed these approaches offered tools to evaluate, interpret, and explain the complexity of the linguistic data [24].

Cognitive Discourse Analysis (CODA) focused on language use in natural contexts and explored how language related to cognitive processes. It provided insight into how individuals perceived and represented their life experiences. CODA combined established research traditions in cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics to examine spontaneous language data in order to access mental representations and cognitive structures. The approach, pioneered by [22], aimed to enhance understanding of cognitive processes by analyzing how language mirrored mental schemata and complex cognitive operations such as reasoning and problem-solving.

In this study, CODA was used to examine linguistic features including definite and indefinite articles, modifiers, and syntactic positioning, as indicators of underlying conceptual frameworks. These features, and their distribution across the graffiti, offered clues about shifts in mental schema. Additional elements—such as spatial prepositions, relational structures, discourse markers, and text organization—were also analyzed to uncover the cognitive structures underlying the students' expressions. Thus, CODA allowed for a detailed investigation of how language encoded and reflected individual perspectives and conceptual representations.

In parallel with CODA, the study also employed Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically at the discourse-semantic level, with a focus on experiential meaning through the transitivity system [23]. Experiential meaning referred to how language represented reality—what happened, who was involved, and under what circumstances. The transitivity system involved three core elements:

- a) Processes (actions, events, or states),
- b) Participants (entities involved in the process), and
- c) Circumstances (information about time, place, manner, cause, etc.).

SFL's transitivity system was particularly suitable for this analysis, as it provided insight into the motivations behind the students' graffiti and the contextual triggers that influenced their written expressions. It allowed the researcher to trace the impact of specific experiences and social realities on the language choices made by the students.

The combined use of CODA and SFL enabled a multidimensional analysis that addressed both the cognitive-affective states and the linguistic features of the graffiti. CODA contributed a cognitive and psychological perspective, while SFL emphasized the structure and function of language. By integrating these two approaches, the study offered a comprehensive framework for interpreting the graffiti. This synthesis revealed how structured language reflected social identity, mental schema, and collective or personal experiences such as intimacy, resistance, or existential reflection. It not only examined *what* was said, but also *how* and *why* it was articulated within specific social and cognitive contexts.

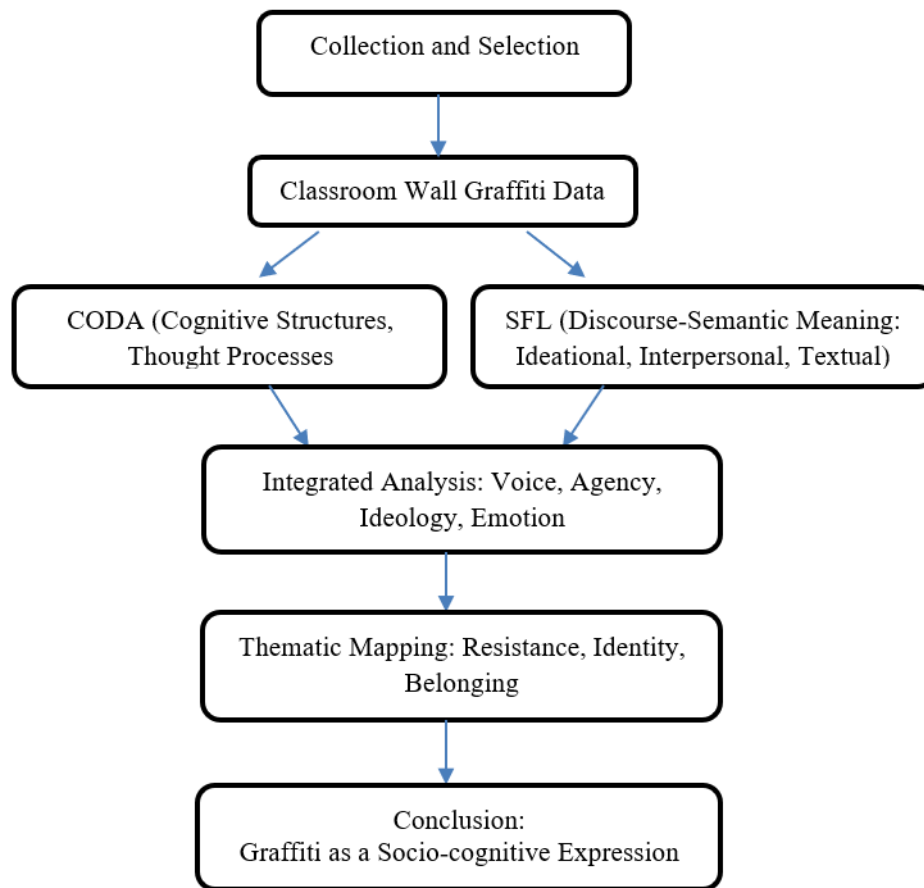


Figure 1. Conceptual Flowchart: Integration of CODA & SFL.

The material under examination includes 222 classroom wall graffiti written by the Lebanese University students, specifically at the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities in the English Department. The demographic background of the graffiti writers is as follows: mostly females (since rarely do many male students enroll in this field) of the second and third year of their BA (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic distribution.

| Gender distribution | Faculties | Department | Year levels |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Females | Arts and Humanities | English | Third |
| Females | Arts and Humanities | English | Second |

The graffiti were collected over a period of a year and a half, by taking photos of the walls on which they were written. The material was then eclectically chosen by the researcher after eliminating the graffiti that were irrelevant to the purpose of the study. Irrelevance relates to offensive language and repetitive themes and topics. Table 2 shows summarizing data selection.

Table 2. Data selection summary.

| Total graffiti collected | Excluded | Irrelevant samples | Final sample |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 222 | 50 | 43 | 129 |
| | Offensive language | Repetitive themes & topics | |

3. Results and Discussion

The material is diverse in its ideas and themes. The graffiti under analysis are mainly written by university students. What distinguishes them is their inclusion of various ideological stances

that convey different cognitive and psychological states. Some even reveal a resistance ideology such as "Fight!" which is a call to an action in the face of a submissive regime.

Although the main producers are students, the material shows that there are other participants involved in what the graffiti has to offer. For example, in "Love u Roro xoxo" the main producer is a male who is in love with a girl whose pet name is Roro. So, this phrase comes as a testimony statement of love, with an implied yearning for kisses and embrace. As such, intimacy governs such a statement. The reason for writing it may be the inability of the writer to confess love directly probably because he is unable to face the girl or he fears a negative reaction on her part.

In "Ur love destroyed me" there is another participant but exists in a situation that contrasts the one in the previous graffiti. Here, the writer is expressing his deep psychological state; a state of depression and helplessness. However, an external unknown participant is the cause of the intolerance of the graffiti producer in "Can't tolerate it anymore". This phrase might express a study situation or failure in an exam. It might even be that the student is suffering from a problem at home but is unable to pronounce it there. So, the classroom wall pouring out means for what this student is suffering from.

Contrary to the state of the above students, having friends and being part of a society where a sense of belonging exists and everyone shares opinions and gives advice, are the main messages in the following examples:

"Dandoun, Sara, Rola Best friends"

"We students, we people"

"A whole...study [must] be organized into hierarchy"

"Encourage students to consider how viewpoints can change"

"Every page must be focused on"

Other graffiti carry existential and philosophical ideas despite the young age of its writers, and as such, either what they read or studied as well as their life experience are the major participants and contributors in the graffiti. Examples are "Marching to change", "I believe in self-discipline and it will change life", "use some inner insight", and "culture changes through Time". Here, the core incentive is the intention to "change". The lexical item 'change' is used as a verb and as a noun and simultaneously it is an action, a motivation, and a result.

In contrast to the mentioned graffiti, narration and storytelling dominate some other graffiti. The participants here might either be fictive characters whom the student read about or are people who really exist in the life of the student, but for some reason the graffiti producer decided to mask their identity in the form of a narrative. Examples are "there is lady trapped by a curse... His grief and loss expressed over the death of his friend", "Tough times touches his family", and "the mirror breaks when she leaves".

Sometimes students want to be informative and expressive of something, either about themselves or about an internal psychological state and an issue. For example, "my brain is too big to study" is a pompous expression of one's ability, as is the statement "I was born a genius". In "It's my birthday" two notions arise. It possibly reflects that the student is happy to announce the event or might indicate loneliness where there is no one to celebrate it with. This might also show that everyone around him or her is indifferent to this event. A striking example of suffering is in "the edge of insanity? Is it possession? Is it insanity? This is cold". This clearly demonstrates that its writer is suffering psychologically and cognitively. This student is unable to cope with life demands and pressures. The nouns 'insanity' and 'possession' are indicative of

the results of an act of an external agent on the writer. The clue comes with the adjective 'cold'. So, the student is going insane probably because there was a rejection of him/her from the other partner. Accordingly, the series of questions are from the student to the student's own self. Hence, it is an internal monologue or thinking which is expressed via the classroom wall graffiti. This analytical overview focuses on the writers of the graffiti and the participants in terms of what is going on in such writings, which paves the way for a deeper analysis according to the selected theories of analysis in methodology section.

3.1. Linguistic features of selected graffiti.

Love u Roro xoxo: This expression starts with the verb 'love' whose object is 'Roro'. However, the pronoun 'you' is written as 'u' and "Roro" is the receiver of such love or the object. Hence, the writer used a double object through the references 'u and Roro' in order to stress the receiver. Moreover, there is an implied 'I' in this love confession statement. So, this statement becomes 'I love you Roro'. In addition, there is the use of nouns through the graphetic symbols 'xoxo'. Semiotically, they refer to 'hugs and kisses'. These reveal the extent of love this person has for Roro. Therefore, because she is not actually present he sends her his hugs and kisses.

Can't tolerated anymore: The use of the modal 'can' and then negation 'not' dominates this expression to reveal a specific situation that the speaker is in. The verb tolerate denotes that the speaker has arrived at a psychological state that made the situation unbearable. This is certain by the adverb 'anymore' where it refers to time. Also, this speaker did not use the pronoun 'I' to refer to himself or herself. Hence, the omission of this pronoun creates an intensity of the psychological/ mental situation of the speaker.

Ur love destroyed me: The pronoun 'ur/your' acts as the head of this expression to make the focus on the reason of the destruction. It's an expression of someone who is not only tortured by love but is also destroyed. The use of the verb 'destroy' shows the intensity of the effect of the addressee's love on the speaker. As such, this verb adds an extra semantic feature which is beyond torture. In this way, the speaker is able to express the extent of which his psychological situation and the emotional state have reached.

We students, we people: This expression is a phrase that is distinctive. It belongs to the structure of slogans. Usually such as structure is chanted during marches or protests. The use of the pronoun 'we' puts emphasis on the subject which is 'students'. Furthermore, this collective noun is collocated with a macro collective noun which denotes more collectivity, which is the noun 'people'. Therefore, the collective noun 'students' is equated with the more collective noun 'people' to reveal that the students are part of the people.

Dandoun, Sara, Rola, Best friends: This is a nominal expression dominated by four nouns. Such nouns are used sequentially to denote the number of the individuals whom the speaker considers to be best friends. Such an expression is a clear announcement of who the best friends of the speaker are. However, the omission of the verb 'are' stresses the importance of the nouns and the degree of friendship existing among them, which is indicated by the superlative adjective 'best'.

I was here someday: This is a statement which reveals that the speaker wants to attest his existence in the classroom. It is shown through the use of the pronoun 'I' and the verb 'was'. The significance of such a statement is in the use of the past tense. Although the verb is in the past tense, the speaker has written it during the study at university. The significance exists in the expression being a statement for anyone who reads it after the speaker has left the

university. The adverb of time 'someday' gives the expression an extra semantic feature which is 'once upon a time the speaker existed and left a trace'. Such a graffiti is philosophical and existential in nature.

I am here and will remain: This is a statement that conveys deep thinking since the speaker wants to assert their existence. The use of 'am' and the adverb 'here' add a sense of grounding to the statement. Also, the use of futurity in 'will + remain' further solidifies the graffiti writer's belief in leaving an imprint at university. The extra semantic feature is a philosophical outcry of identity and existential assertion that the graffiti writer is someone effective who has a role to play in our world.

Fight! This graffiti is composed of a single lexical item which is a verb in the imperative form. The significance of such a lexical item is that it acts as a direct call for breaking barriers through taking a decisive action, which is standing in the face of or against someone or something that hinders the speaker from achieving something. Moreover, it is a call directed to anyone who reads this word. Hence, its existence is a constant call for action.

Revolution: This graffiti is also similar to the previous one and is composed of a single lexical item whose grammatical form is a noun. What differentiates this lexical item from the previous one is that it is a more collective item that includes a specific action which is 'to rebel'. Hence, the existence of such a word calls for an action which is to refuse a current situation that prevents the progress of someone.

Cleanliness is next to godliness: This statement belongs to the genre of religious discourse. The noun 'cleanliness' acts as a reminder of the importance of hygiene and tidiness. The writer probably wants to send an indirect message of the importance of keeping the classroom clean.

My brain is too big to study: The focus of this sentence is the writer's 'brain'. The comparative expression 'too big' reveals that the speaker considers his/her brain to be of importance in the matter of studying. However, the use of the adverb 'too' leads to the understanding that this student is creating an excuse for not studying.

I was born a genius: This sentence relates to the previous one. May be it was written by the same student. The significance of this sentence exists in the use of the noun 'genius' which adds an extra semantic meaning to denote that the speaker is too intelligent to study. Similarly, this sentence might be an excuse for the speaker in order not to study.

It is my birthday: This is a statement on the part of the student to announce that the day of writing this graffiti was this person's birthday. The use of the pronoun 'my' together with the use of 'it' signifies the student's yearning for others to share in the birthday.

Habits of the mind: The collective noun 'habits', which is the head of this expression reveals that the writer is calling the reader's attention to the workings of the mind. Pragmatically, it is an implied call for students to train their mind and make it accustomed to critical thinking.

Students think before acting and considered different courses of action: This sentence is a statement on the part of the student about the importance of thinking before acting. The collocation of the verbs 'think' and 'act' stress the need for considering the pros and cons of any situation before taking action.

Thinking flexibly: This expression is composed of a verb and an adverb. The continuous tense of the verb 'think' emphasizes the progress of the act. Also, the use of the adverb 'flexibly'

is a call for accepting the ideas of others and not to impose one's opinion. Moreover, it is a call to look at something from various perspectives.

A whole communication study organized into hierarchy: The structure of this expression which is noun + verb + noun emphasizes that the action of studying should be done in groups and according to a hierarchical organization. Hence, this expression is a call to students about how to study and organize such as study. Accordingly, it functions as an indicative of the ingredient for success.

Understand ourselves: The verb 'understand' stresses the need for the person to know himself/ herself. The use of the collective pronoun 'ourselves' is a call for self understanding by anyone who reads this expression.

Mentally and psychological Endurance: This phrase opens with an adverb which is followed by an adjective. Although the structure is wrong, where it should be 'mental and psychological endurance', the writer reveals the ways of coping with the studies. Pragmatically, it means that the student should train the mind and psyche to be strong and endure anything that comes up during the process of the study. Thus, through mental and psychological endurance the student can surpass any impediment.

Encourage students to consider how viewpoints can change: This sentence is a direct call to a teacher probably, in the field of education, to incentivize students to think critically. The imperative verb at the beginning of the sentence clearly reveals that students have some issues to consider with respect to critical thinking.

Political propaganda: This expression reveals that the student is voicing an idea which is probably not completed with respect to his/her thoughts and opinions about this notion. Such an adjective phrase belongs to political advertising, especially in the media.

Thinking something students? This is an expression in the form of an incomplete question. It exclaims about the students' mental activity. The correct structure should be 'are you thinking of something, students? The writer is probably demanding to know what is going on in the mind of the students, probably during their reading of this graffiti.

Confessing her feelings: This verb phrase which is written in the continuous tense is an indicative that the writer is pouring out her feelings on the classroom world or she is confessing her feelings to someone whom she loves or even a friend. The use of the continuous stance is significant because it shows that the writer is in continuous confession of the feelings.

Human behavior is predictable and controllable: This expression is in the form of a complete sentence. It is a statement that reveals the internal thinking of its writer. It also indicates that the writer is confessing or stating that 'we can predict and control human behavior'. This graffiti is probably a result of a particular situation that the writer has encountered and as a result is informing the reader about human behavior.

Poetry is touching: This expression, whose head is a noun, acts as a testimony of the effect of poetry on the writer. The use of the verb 'touch' in the continuous form shows that the writer is affected every time he/she reads a poem.

It does not start with pleasure but ends not badly: This expression attests to its writer's idea about something encountered in life and experienced it firsthand. The use of 'it' is called "empty it". Such a pronoun can refer to any entity that the writer is speaking about. The writer uses this pronoun probably because they do not want to specify the entity that doesn't begin in a pleasurable way. The use of negation reveals that there is no clear attitude about the entity or the issue which is referred to as 'it'. Hence such a usage signifies neutrality.

These factions are divided: Such an expression is important because it reveals the context through which it is written. The noun 'factions' which is in the collective form, is the topic of this wall graffiti. Also, the lexical item 'divided' reveals the situation that the factions are facing: It is one that makes them unable to be unified. This expression indicates that the writer is voicing an opinion about a political/religious conflict or issue. Furthermore, the use of the deictic marker 'these' means that the writer does not want to name who these factions are.

Divisions erupt: This phrase relates to the previous expression where it is a continuation of the division, but in a more forceful way. This is revealed by the verb 'erupts' which carries an extra semantic meaning that denotes explosion. Pragmatically, the expression shows that division was building up bit by bit over a period of time and suddenly it was clearly brought to light and there is no way that anyone can hide or prevent it.

Thinking of tomorrow: The verb 'think' in its continuous form is the head of this phrase. The expression means that this person is hoping for a better future and is in constant thinking of what is next. It also shows that this person is someone who makes plans for what is to come in the future.

Exploration of cultural differences: The verb 'explore' in the continuous tense shows that the writer of this graffiti is someone who accepts cultural differences and has flexible thinking. The collocation 'cultural differences' reveals that the student is tackling a social aspect and is giving it a consideration.

Sender, message, and receiver: This expression is composed of three nouns, is in the form of triplet or a tri-focal structure, and is under the domain of conversation analysis.

3.2. SFL Transitivity system.

Applying the transitivity system to the selected graffiti enables the analyst to exhibit how language use represents reality and how such reality is expressed. As such, highlighting the experiential meaning through language analysis shows how the life experience of the graffiti writers is discursively constructed. Theoretically, the transitivity system includes the notions of processes, participants, and circumstances (Table 3).

First, the material processes include notions of acting, challenging, and doing. They request a physical action on the part of the doer. For example, the graffiti expression 'Fight!' is a material process where there is a hidden actor who is the reader. It is a direct call to take an action towards a particular situation. Hence, it is imperative that the reader takes a course of action which is 'fighting'. Other examples include 'runs to his own room', 'division erupts', and 'the mirror breaks when she leaves'. These also include a physical action through the lexical items 'run, erupt, break, leave'. Accordingly, they reveal a dynamic world that is in continuous flux.

Second, the mental processes include sensory and cognitive notions such as perception, thinking, desiring, and feeling. As such, they require an experience and an entity regarding something that is sensed. Chief graffiti that contain mental processes are, for example, 'love u Roro xoxo' in which affection and love are expressed toward a receptor who is Roro, through a senser, who is the writer of the graffiti. Other examples include emotions and cognition as in 'can't tolerate it' where the pronoun 'it' is the receptor, and 'I believe in self-discipline' where 'believe' relates to the cognition of the writer and 'self-discipline' is the entity or phenomenon.

Third, relational processes are visible in the classroom wall graffiti, which mainly include states that are related to identification, attribution, and the notion of being. So, they necessitate

the idea of a carrier and an attributive or the notion of 'entity-value'. Examples of this include 'cleanliness is next to godliness' where there is an attributive relation exemplified in the verb 'is', a carrier which is 'cleanliness' and an attributive which is 'next to godliness'. Another example is in 'My brain is too big to study' which contains an attribution verb 'is', a carrier 'my brain', and an attributive 'too big to study'.

Table 3. Graffiti transitivity system.

| Graffiti | Process Type | Process (verb) | Participants (Roles) | Circumstances |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Can't tolerate it anymore | Mental | Tolerate | Sensor: I Phenomenon: it | Anymore |
| Ur love destroyed me | Material | Destroy | Actor: Ur love, Goal: me | Breakup |
| We students, we people | Relational | are | Carrier: We students, Attribute: We people | Revolution, communal identity |
| Dandoun, Sara, Rola Best friends | Relational | are | Carrier: Dandoun, Sara, Rola, Attribute: Best friends | Friendship, university |
| I was here someday Revolution | Existential Material/ Relational | Was bring/is | Existent: I Actor: Implied, Carrier: Revolution | Someday Dissatisfaction |
| Cleanliness is next to godliness | Relational | Is | Carrier: Cleanliness, Attribute: next to godliness | Eternal |
| My brain is too big to study | Relational | Is | Carrier: My brain, Attribute: too big to study | |
| It is my birthday | Relational | Is | Carrier: It; Attribute: my birthday | Validation |
| Understand ourselves | Mental | Understand | Sensor: We Receiver: ourselves | |
| Confessing her feelings | Verbal, Mental | Confess | Sayer: She; Verbiage: her feelings | Love relation |
| Thinking of tomorrow | Mental | Think | Sensor: We; Target: tomorrow | Hope, ambition |
| Marching to change | Material, Existential | March | Actor: We, People | Change, self- assertion |
| He became a being for survival | Relational, Existential | Becomes | Actor: He, Attribute: a being | For survival |
| He runs to his own room | Material | Runs | Actor: He; Goal: his own room | Escape |
| His action signifies his decision | Relational | Signifies | Carrier: His action, Attribute: decision | |
| I believe in self- discipline | Mental | Believes | Sensor: I, Receptor: self- discipline, 'I' by extension | Ordered |
| Use the inner insight to live | Material, Existential | Use, Live | Actor: You (reader); Goal: inner insight (inner-self as receptor by extension) | Self-assertion |
| This is cold, is it insanity? | Relational | be | Carrier: This; Attribute: cold | Breakup |
| A man of information | Relational | Possess (embedded) | Carrier: (He), Attribute: man of information | Knowledge, education |

Fourth, verbal processes occur less frequently in the graffiti than the occurrence of the previous processes. Communication is the prime feature which includes a speaker (in this case the graffiti writer), the receiver (reader), and the verbal entity. This is shown in 'Tell me a story about yourself', which includes a verb 'to tell', an addressee (implied) 'you', which is the reader, an addressor and a receiver 'me' (i.e. the writer of the graffiti), and the entity which is 'a story about yourself'. Another example is 'confessing her feelings' which includes the verb 'confess' and a speaker 'she' which is implied. However, the receiver of the confession, who is the listener, is not disclosed and as such remains anonymous.

Process number five is the existential process which relates to the notion of being, i.e. existing and present at a particular place and time because of a certain event or a situation of occurrence. An important example is the statement 'There is a lady trapped by a curse and a

castle'. The existential process resides in the verb 'is', the notion of being or situation is 'lady trapped', and the event or cause is 'a curse'. Also, the noun 'castle' refers to the place that exists either on its own or it is where the lady is kept 'physically' trapped.

The final process is the behavioral, which includes actions related to psychology or physiology such as dreaming, crying, laughing, etc. An example of such process is seen in 'his grief and loss expressed over the death of his friend'. The lexical item 'expressed' shows the behavioral process, the psychological action or behavior is 'his grief and loss', and the initiator is 'death of his friend'.

In addition to the processes and participants, it is important to reveal the circumstances, i.e. the context of situation of occurrence of the graffiti. The circumstances are extracted by asking the wh- questions: where, when, why, what, and 'how'. These questions provide the plot and the setting (time and place) which compose the context, in addition to the manner of occurrence. Examples of circumstances are 'he runs to his own room', 'the mirror breaks when she leaves', and 'it does not start with pleasure but ends not badly'. In the first example there is a location which is 'his room', in the second example there is time which is 'when she leaves', and in the third example there is manner which shows 'how', i.e. 'with pleasure and not badly'.

3.3. CODA.

Scrutinizing the selected classroom wall graffiti through the application of CODA paves the pathways into knowing the students' stances, be it social or political ideas or emotions. The application of CODA together with SFL provides a deep knowledge of the students' cognition and helps in recognizing the graffiti as a powerful tool for voicing one's mind (Table 4). Although the transitivity system includes a mental process, CODA contains various levels of the cognitive process. This sharpens our knowledge of the students' mental schemata, norms, beliefs and identity construction through the way language is used by the graffiti writers.

Table 4. Graffiti CODA: processes, features, and themes.

| # | Graffiti | Cognitive Processes | Discourse Features | Possible Themes |
|----|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 | Can't tolerate it anymore | Stress, Resistance | Implicature | Psychological Pressure |
| 4 | We students, we people | Asserting Identity | Repetition, Stress | Collective Identity |
| 9 | Cleanliness is next to godliness | Moral Reasoning | Proverbial | Discipline |
| 10 | My brain is too big to study | Self-Elevation | Irony, Boasting | Intellect, evade effort |
| 13 | Habits of the mind | Metacognition | Functional | Cognitive strategies |
| 20 | Political propaganda | Persuasion | Manipulation | Politics, election |
| 24 | Poetry is touching | Art appreciation | Special diction | Nature, love |
| 34 | Marching to change | Will to change | Metaphor | Activism, independence |
| 37 | Lady trapped by a curse | Narration | Metaphor | Suffering |
| 43 | I believe in self-discipline | Will power | Assert confidence | Self-improvement |
| 47 | The edge of insanity? | Existential | Rhetorical | Mind control |
| 52 | Approach texts with skepticism. | Critical thinking | Didactic | Analysis, academia |

Thus, the analysis according to CODA is insightful as it exposes the cultural, social, individual as well as the mental representations and ideologies of the students in the graffiti. A chief element in the analysis relates to the themes embedded in the graffiti. Through them, the cognitive processes and discursive features are exemplified.

First, the theme of love is evident in the graffiti 'love u Roro', 'ur love destroyed me', and 'can't tolerate it'. They focus on emotional dilemma and affectionate relation, and reveal the struggles in such relations. So, emotion, heartbreak, and love are focal points in this graffiti.

Second, revolution and resistance are powerful themes present in specific graffiti such as 'Fight!', 'Revolution', and 'Political propaganda'. The student/writer focuses in these graffiti on challenge, agency, and defiance to a norm that no longer suits their aspirations.

Third, mental cognitive abilities and critical thinking are exhibited in 'thinking flexibly', 'every page must be focused on', and 'habits of the mind'. These graffiti cognitively shed light on academic achievement, success, and educational strategies. Accordingly, themes of educational management and critical thinking dominate such graffiti.

Fourth, philosophical questions and existentialism govern particular graffiti as in 'tell me about yourself', 'I was here someday', and 'the edge of insanity?'. They cognitively target notions of identity, self-assertion, and self-reflection. That is, how one's image is reflected through one's words. Thus, introspection, expressing one's self, and the health of the mind are notions that dominate these graffiti.

Finally, creativity and the skill of crafting a story are the essence of specific graffiti such as 'tough times touches his family', 'the mirror breaks when she leaves', 'there is a lady trapped in a castle', and 'in an imaginary world of snow drifts'. These writings show how the students discursively construct a world of their own through narrative structure. Hence, imagination is the cognitive lens of these graffiti which in turn conveys that the students are literary influenced via their academic study. Accordingly, mythology, escape, and a fairy tale world dominate such graffiti. Table 5 presents a sample SFL and CODA side-by-side sample analysis. In addition to the tables highlighting the detailed results of the analysis, below is a side-by-side table (Table 6) summarizing SFL and CODA results:

Table 5. Sample SFL and CODA analysis side-by-side.

| Sample Graffiti | SFL | | | | CODA | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Process Type | Process | Participants (Roles) | Circumstances | Cognitive Process | Discourse Features | Possible Themes |
| Love u Roro xoxo | Mental | Love | I, Roro | Relationship | Emotion | Direct | Love |
| I was here someday | Existential | Was | Existent: I | Someday | Existential | Stress | Philosophical |
| Fight! | Material | Fight | You, We | Revolution | Resistance | Imperative | Rebellion |
| I was born a genius | Material | Born | I; genius | Self-motivation | Self-elevation | Show off | Intellect, pride |
| It is my birthday | Relational | Is | It; my birthday | Validation | Existential | Direct, Stress | Identity, |
| Confessing her feelings | Verbal, Mental | Confess | She, her feelings | Love relation | Emotion | Direct | Love |

Table 6. SFL & CODA results summary.

| SFL | Samples | CODA | Samples |
|------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Dominant Process Types | Mental (emotion, thought), Material (action, protest), Relational (identity, status) | Cognitive Schema | Resistance, Affection, Identity, Existential Crisis, Self-discipline, Skepticism |
| Participants | Mostly 1st person (I, we, you); abstract agents (e.g., "love", "revolution") | Discourse Features | Imperatives, repetition, metaphor, rhetorical questions, irony, proverbs |
| Circumstances | Abstract or temporal (e.g., someday, anymore, for survival); rarely physical | Linguistic Patterns | Declaratives for identity /assertion; directives for action; metaphors for emotion |

3.4. Discussion of SFL and CODA results.

The analysis of the data and Table 2 reveal that the processes in the graffiti amalgamate together in order to compose an experiential reality that is vivid and active. The graffiti writers are

constantly engaging in the transitivity processes in relation to particular situations. In turn, such contexts not only construct the students' world but also shape their life experience. In this respect, the classroom wall graffiti analysis conveys how the students' world is linguistically constructed. For example, identity is constructed via attributes which show how students see themselves [6]. Physical actions are expressed through action processes, whereas abstract processes are expressed through the ideological concepts of the students. Moreover, mental and emotional states are extensively present in the graffiti where they convey the students' psyche and cognitive conditions. Such states project the struggles that the students are facing in their life, whether in or outside the classroom walls. Furthermore, another important point that the analysis highlights in the graffiti is the responsibility saddled on the students' shoulders. The students consider themselves as active social members who function as agents of change, behaving according to their own view of the world and ideological underpinnings.

Therefore, the existential processes reflect an intrinsic desire in the graffiti writers to be accredited and remembered. As for the material processes, the graffiti are a decisive tool for motivating the readers to take an action such as to rebel or engage in certain activities that result in a significant change. With respect to the mental and relational processes, the classroom wall graffiti stress important notions regarding social hierarchy and existentialism [4]. As such, graffiti reveal the students' identity, sense of belonging, cognition, and emotions. These notions, whether in the relational or mental processes, are abundant in the graffiti. They mirror the students' yearning to prove their 'being' and self-definition by transforming into agents of change in their society. Also, these processes reflect the students' psychological, emotional, and cognitive (struggles and conflicts) states, all of which project an image of the students' inner world that is molded according to their life experiences. Hence, this coincides with the view of SFL concerning the function of the experiential meaning as being an encoder of a specific world view that is shaped via the social individual's experience in life [23].

Table 4 shows that the selected graffiti mirror the internal states of the students whether they are cognitive or affective. The graffiti embed notions such as intimate emotions and sometimes emotional outcries which act as an escape valve from the social and academic pressure. Also, students assert their identity and communal belonging which serve as a means of empowerment. So, although they are students, they have a voice and identity. Students affirm their social, cultural, and moral values mainly through identity and religious proverbs [2]. However, some students take an ironic stance towards their academic responsibilities because of academic pressure. What is interesting is that some graffiti exemplify the way in which students' study, that is, their organization of their study skills, through critical thinking and training their brain so that they acquire the 'habits of the mind'. Furthermore, their ideological position is conveyed when they indicate their knowledge of the world with respect to how politicians, through emotional appeals, influence the voters' actions and opinions [5]. In addition, the students' belief in the flux of things and the possibility for change through resistance and personal discipline exemplifies their high level of maturity. Hence, many linguistic, discursive, and cognitive features compose the core of the classroom wall graffiti. Accordingly, they invite us to consider such classroom wall writings as basic means for unveiling the students' cognitive schemata where they are turned into effective weapons of voice in the student's hands.

4. Conclusions

The graffiti analysis highlights how the Lebanese University students organize their study skills through critical thinking and brain training. The graffiti express the students' ideological stance when they exhibit the students' cognition of how manipulation occurs, for instance. The students' peaking maturity level is thus demonstrated by their conviction in the flux of things and the potential for change via resistance and self-discipline. Therefore, the constituent elements of the classroom wall graffiti include aspiration and critical thinking. Accordingly, classroom wall graffiti contain a number of discursive elements such as imperatives, repetitions, frames, emphasis, particular diction, rhetorical questions, symbolism, and metaphor. As a result, the classroom wall graffiti prompt everyone who reads them to view these writings as fundamental tools for revealing the students' cognitive repertoire. Thus, they are transformed into potent means of expression. Although the analysis was limited to classroom wall graffiti, an analysis of classroom desk graffiti is of essence for future researchers to ponder on. Another limitation is gender. Since most of the graffiti writers are females because of the English Language major, it is important to conduct a similar or a different study on graffiti written by males to show the different results. Future researchers might also consider the application of rhetorics, pragmatics, and narratology theories to further exhibit the importance of written graffiti.

Competing Interest

No competing interest has been identified.

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