

LANGUAGE AND CONTENT IN GRAFFITI: A CASE OF CHITTAGONG

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This study analyzed the content and language in graffiti prevailing in Chittagong. The aim of the research was to examine how and why graffiti artists utilized graffiti. The data were collected from various places of Chittagong. Two frameworks i.e., Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Brown and Clarke's thematic content analysis, were used to analyze data and the research method used in this study was qualitative. The findings reveal that graffiti artists used this form of art for a variety of purposes (such as political ideologies, social concerns) and they used diverse codes to express their meanings.

Keywords: graffiti, thematic content analysis, critical discourse analysis, text analysis

1. Introduction

Graffiti is the scribble writings found on the walls of public places. It is found almost in every city of a country and conveys important meanings related to society, politics, religion, romance, and culture among many others. Graffiti takes the forms of various semiotic images such as symbols, colors, signs, and languages. Chiluwa (2008) defines it as "any form of writing or images on the walls or surfaces of public buildings, parks, toilets, buses or trains, usually bearing some political or sexual contents, a lover's pledge, proposition, or obscene words" (p. 274). Graffiti may exist in multiple forms such as writings, paintings and drawings and is "used to communicate socio-cultural and political messages" (Paudel & Neupane, 2019, p. 52). So, the study of graffiti is significant as it provides a lens to observe and examine society, politics and culture from diverse perspectives and thereby helps to understand those institutions better. It is interesting that graffiti serves a variety of purposes. Sometimes, it functions as medium of protest against social vices and demands a new social order to replace. Often, it is also used to raise voice against the existing political

repression, misrule, vote rigging, corruption, and misuse of power. Besides, it is frequently used as a means of expression of love because lovers cannot articulate their love openly due to social norms and restrictions. According to Ross (2016) some common subjects of graffiti are vandalism, power imbalances, protest, resistance, surveillance, punishment, urban incivility, crime, control, codes, underground networks and processes, criminal justice, illegalities, harms, identity, gentrification and deviance etc. He (2016, p. 1) defines it as "... words, figures, and images that have been drawn, marked, scratched, etched, sprayed, painted, and/or written on surfaces where the owner of the property (whether public or private) has NOT given permission to the perpetrator".

1.1 Context

Not unlike many other major cities in the world, graffiti is prevalent in many parts of Chittagong in many forms such as pictures, writing, art work, symbols. If any one takes a short tour around the area or at least city, this art work would not elude the eyes of the observer. And like many other cities, it is used for almost similar purposes such as a means of social and political protest, oppression, unrest, injustice and expression of love and threat. Although the people of Chittagong comprise predominantly a monolingual community, graffiti images are available mostly in Bangla and occasionally in English if we analyze the linguistic aspects on graffiti. Apart from this mixed modality of expression, sometimes only in Bangla, sometimes only in English, and sometimes both in Bangla and English, the availability of graffiti in images, symbols, pictures and other semiotic resources is another significant aspect. Reasonably enough, such widespread and ever expansive forms of expression have established itself as an influential

form of communication and deserves special attention by researchers. No studies on the content and linguistic analysis of graffiti of Chittagong have been conducted so far. This gap was the motivating factor that triggered my interest in initiating the study of graffiti.

The objectives of this study are:

(a) To identify various domains of discourse through the analysis of the language and messages in the graffiti and figure out its implications.

(b) To analyze the language and linguistic forms used in graffiti.

1.2 Literature review

Grffiti is not only a common phenomenon in modern urban cityscape, but also has been prevalent in many ancient pre-literate or literate societies such as in ancient Egypt, pre-Islamic Arabia, and medieval Italy and these images or markings existing from the time of invention of writing or the start of antiquity have been identified on walls, columns and many other architectural forms and available in private and public places, cities, countryside, places of worship, streets, market-places and inside and outside houses. They mostly appeared in pictures, symbols, pictograms and also in words written in multiple languages and the variety of media they appeared included stone, pottery, walls, floors, and were decorated in inked, painted, plaster, scratched, or charcoaled. Ancient graffiti represented a plethora of topics such as political messages, sexual imagery, names, pictures of objects, people and animals, everyday life, belief system, ancient economy, and literary allusions with magical or sacred meanings, praise of good governance, and acceptance of authority. Ancient graffiti represents a variety of competing and often different concerns. It can be studied or interpreted as a debate about bilingualism, education, ancient literacy, way of life, social meanings, and cultural values just to mention a few of them. Some of the finest instances of ancient graffiti are Pompeii, Dura-Europos, Herculaneum in Italy, Aphrodisius and Smyrna in modern Turkey (Baird & Taylor, 2016, pp. 11-17).

Modern graffiti can be conceptualized as a subcultural reaction to dominant power structures while others view them as a medium of self-expression or questioning authority. Lennon (2016) while writing about the hobo graffiti of the subcultural world in the USA states hobos, a group of transient working people -both men and women, used to travel by train from one place to another place in search of sustenance and jobs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He describes that “their invisibility is the key to their movement and the graffiti on walls of train cars, water towers or railroad towns speak of their transience” and they are reflections of their everyday life. (p. 28) In other words, this invisible subculture had their own values, life styles and codes and expressed their boredom, anger, resistance, parasitic existence, artistic, creative and political issues through graffiti. So, hobo graffiti can also be interpreted as expression of symbolic presence, dissatisfaction with life, poverty, nomadic existence of them, uncertainties of lived experiences, sense of belonging, bond of community, and illegal relationship and consist of materials such as logos, monikers, and dates. (Lennon, 2016)

However, Pabon (2016) wants to see graffiti from feminist perspective and opines that whatever the subject matter of graffiti could be -a message with confrontational ideas, a silhouette of celebrity, or an unidentified name or image, social invisibility, anarchic aesthetic of communication -the writing written on the wall is unmistakably gendered, classed and raced. Talking about the emergence of contemporary street arts as descended from Hip Hop graffiti, she states that street arts “generally understood to be less “risky”, less physical, less dangerous, and therefore less “masculine” (Pabon, 2016, p. 78). She puts forward that historically graffiti excluded the perspectives of women or girls and the gender differences were not taken into consideration and with some exceptions, this subculture is reflection of western hegemonic gender norms. The increased participation of women in writing or portraying street arts rather than in wall writing, according to her, establishes the fact that they are unwilling to take part in illegal activities as street arts are legal while

graffiti is an act of vandalism and also their leanings towards street arts reflect their inherent unwillingness to trespass private property. She also maintains that the social dilemma, paradoxes and judgmental attitudes of patriarchic society have a role to suppress women to participate less in graffiti arts. Her analysis of graffiti by female artists reveals that they have made themselves a part of this history through negating, rejecting, exploiting and manipulating the ways graffiti is viewed and interpreted in relation to representation of gender. In order to do this, they assumed anonymity to reject sexism within the subculture, painting together publicly in front of an audience, encouraging, and providing training other women and girl to be a part of the culture, celebrating women's bodies and sexuality without degrading themselves, making use of digital culture and reaching global audience.

Here I present some recent studies on graffiti to have an understanding of research trends in this domain. Arluke et al (1987) study the gender gap between male and female graffiti artists by looking at the writings in both female and male washrooms of various institutions. They point out interesting observations stating that the gap had narrowed from 1972 to 1984 and the general patterns show that considering language and content, male graffiti made more sexual references than female graffiti and the language and content in female graffiti are more socially acceptable. Their overall finding is that in the decade of 70s, there had not been any significant difference in the pattern of gender difference evident in the content and language of graffiti. Abu-Jaber (2013) investigates the grammatical errors in graffiti committed by second language learners in Jordanian educational institutions. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the writer concludes that the students, the non-native speakers of English, develop a sort of ownership with English and simplify English grammar rules resulting in additional errors in their statements used in graffiti. He assumes that such errors are affected by SMS texting, globalization and internet communication and caused by overgeneralization, interference of the mother tongue, and ignorance.

Farnia (2014) not unlike the article written by Jordanian writers, investigates how classroom walls are used by students to express their love, hatred, religious sentiments, disappointment or complaints, self-identity and political messages. The writer observes that the predominance of religious themes instead of racial, sexual and political writings on the walls as the latter is prohibited in Iran both socially, religiously and perhaps politically as well. In his article, Toenjes (2015) reveals how graffiti is used by the people of Palestine and others to establish communication with global audiences. Through the analysis of location and content on the separation wall between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, he demonstrates how the Palestinians and other international tourists use graffiti to voice their protest and perspectives and thus serve as the platform for transnational dialogues, linkages between nations and individuals, and function as a "global canvass to communicate experiences of occupation to transnational audiences" (p. 61). The locations such as refugee camps, separation wall, and other tourist destination are very tactfully used by the graffiti artists for easier viewing and dissemination of information to a diverse type of international tourists coming from various countries of the world. The subject matters on the wall writing comprise Islamic, Christian and Jewish teachings fused with some political and religious implications.

Both El-Nashar and Nayef (2016) studied graffiti on Egyptian vehicles as an expression of artists' social values, religious and political affiliation. Applying Fairclough's (1995) post-structuralist model of discourse analysis, their findings reveal that most of messages articulated in graffiti are religious and replete with social and philosophical quotes. Al-Khawaldeh et al (2017) while analyzing the content and communicative features of wall writings in the walls, corridors, classrooms, and washrooms of universities in Jordan manipulated in graffiti to identify the thoughts and voices of university students observe that graffiti perform a variety of functions pertaining to social, religious, personal, political, and taboo issues and are characterized by

simplicity, variation, distinctiveness. Moreover, they serve as a means of silent communication. In fact, the artists use graffiti as a tool or medium to make their strangled voices heard and express their attitudes, feelings, power, happiness, intolerance and desperation.

Paudel and Neupane (2019) in their article on graffiti in Kathmandu valley analyse the language and content using multimodal discourse analysis maintain that artists use linguistically diverse modes such as signs, words, colors with images to communicate meanings related to culture, politics, oppression against women and gender discrimination. In their qualitative descriptive study, they reveal that communication through multimodal modes such as symbols, images are as important as written or spoken discourse to have a holistic perspective about meaning-making. At this point, one relevant issue is that the researcher while studying research work on graffiti has not noticed any study on graffiti in Chittagong. Therefore, a research gap has been sighted and the present study was undertaken to fill up the gap.

1.3 Theoretical framework

I have used Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis framework and Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic content analysis framework to analyze the content and language used in graffiti in Chittagong. According to Fairclough (1995), language use entails social identities, systems of beliefs and knowledge and social relations. He means that any text plays a significant role and makes a contribution in shaping the three aspects of culture and society. He also maintains that the use of language "helps to reproduce and maintain existing social identities, relationships and systems of knowledge and belief" and also it has the transformative role on all these factors (p. 55). Additionally, the use of thematic discourse analysis framework by Braun and Clark (2006) enabled the researcher to identify, analyze and report patterns or themes within data.

2. Methodology

This study used qualitative approach for data elicitation and the tools used are: (a) text analysis, and (b) observation. The population of the study

comprised around two hundred pictures of graffiti culled from the public and private walls of Chittagong and out of these, 40 pictures were purposively selected as sampling. A POCO C 3 cellphone was used to capture the pictures and data documentation. To narrow down the scope of research, I omitted the images or pictures without writing. Then I focused on only graffiti with written texts and images accompanied by writing for content and linguistic analysis. Then the pictures were thematically and linguistically coded and categorized for description and analysis according to the underlying messages, similarity, themes, and purposes. For the collection of the data, I went to visit various places such as Jamal Khan, War Cemetery, Surson Road, MM Ali Road, Rahmatgonj, KB Abdussattar Road, observed the pictures, images and scribble writings written in many colors and symbols on the public and private walls. When the language of the text in graffiti was written in English, I retained it as it was, but when the text was written in Bangla, I translated it for the sake of wider comprehensibility.

3. Data and discussion

There were four types of graffiti: (a) only wall writing in Bangla without any images, (b) only wall writing in English without any image, (c) wall writing in Bangla with images, and (d) wall writing in English with images. They were written in different materials such as terracotta, walls of the structures, etc. which writer or artists used to communicate their meanings to get across their target audience. The data presented in this article are only the texts in Bangla and English languages copied from the original sources. However, a few photographs are presented here (Figure 1 through 4) to give some idea to the audience how they are in their original places.

Figure 1 presents portraits of martyrs on majestic material terracotta and text in Bangla language. The martyrs in this graffiti are Masterda Surya Sen, Pritilata and Qudi Ram Basu, the revolutionaries who laid down their lives while protesting the injustice against the British rulers.



Figure 1: The martyrs in the fight against the British colonizers



Figure 2: The war heroes of 1971, Jamal Khan

Figure 2 commemorates the contribution of the war heroes who made their supreme sacrifice by embracing death to fight against Pakistan in 1971. Their names alongside the portraits are written in Bangla. The names are Mohiuddin Jahangir, Ruhul Amin, Hamidur Rahman, Mostafa Kamal, Motiur Rahman, Mushi Abdur Rab, and Noor Mohammad Sheikh.



Figure 3: Disclosure of invisible identity, Surson Road



Figure 4: Protest, Chatteswari Road

Figure 3 and 4 are wall writings in English that are not presented in artistic form but are in rather natural form.

The researcher sorted out and categorized data according to a variety of themes such as content, language, and linguistic features in conformity with the framework of critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (1995) and thematic content analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) for the purpose of analysis. The analysis based on the data are presented below under two topics, namely language and contents.

3.1 Use of language in graffiti

The graffiti in many places of Chittagong are in Bangla or in English, as poetry or prose, in various types of linguistic forms, and for various purposes depicting diverse social interests.

3.1.1 Language of graffiti

Language of graffiti in the study area are written either in Bangla or in English. Almost all the graffiti found in the Jamal Khan area were written in Bangla. They were written mostly in prose, but some of them are in poetry, and characterized by legibility, care, use of excellent background, materials used for writing them and can easily draw the attention of passers-by.

- (1) "বাংলার মুখ আমি দেখিযাছি, তাই আমি পৃথিবীর রূপ খুঁজিতে যাই না আর" - জীবনানন্দ দাশ।
"bāmlāra mukha āmi dekhiāchi, tāi āmi pr̥thibīra rūpa khum̃jite yāi nā āra" - *jībanānanda dāśa.*
 "I have seen the beauty of Bengal, I don't need to search the beauty of the world"

- (2) "বে দেশে গুণের সমাদর নেই, সে দেশে গুণী জন্মাতে পারে না" - ডঃ মুহাম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ ।
ye deśe guṇera samādara nei, se deśe guṇī janmāte pāre nā - *Ḍa muhāmmada śahīdullāha*
 "If a country does not value its learned sons, it will stop begetting learned sons."
- (3) মুজিব-১০০
mujib-100
 'Mujib -100.'

Examples (1) through (3) are in Bangla, among them first two are quotes from the widely known people and the third one commemorates 100th birth anniversary of Mujib. Moreover, the first example is poetry and the next two are prose. Because of the didactic purposes and beautification, all of them were written in complete sentences in Bangla.

A few of them in the same are were written in English, perhaps, for making the artists' secret identity known or articulation of self-identity, voicing anger, dissatisfaction, or meaninglessness of life as are evident in figure 3 and 4.

Wall writings in the areas of Surson Road and Chatterswari Road contain the texts in English such as "happy birthday" followed by some symbols and taboos and other expressions such as "happy birthday, my ass", "fuck off", and "say no to understand" among others. These wall writings were found beside one of the English medium schools of Chittagong. It is highly likely that the writers being students of English medium school felt more comfortable in English than Bangla. Besides, love symbols and identity symbols were also used in some of the English graffiti such as "B+R", "A+M", "DB", and "RAJU".

If we compare and contrast between majority of graffiti written in Bangla with these small number of graffiti written in English, we can point out that this new trend shows the growing influence of English in Chittagong as a global language and as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges. This changing urban linguistic landscape or environmental print is occasioned as a part of linguistic imperialism (Sayer, 2010).

3.1.2 Linguistic aspects of wall writings

Many aspects of language use were found in the graffiti of Chittagong including the combination of words, signs and numbers, complete and incomplete structures, normal and figurative language, and various types of sentences.

Examples (3) and (4) show the combination of words or letter with number and sign.

- (4) a. B+R
 b. A+M
 c. X gang

There are both complete and incomplete linguistic structures such as full words or only letters as abbreviation, complete sentence or only a phrase or a word. Example (5) presents incomplete structures, and examples (6) through (12) present complete structures.

- (5) a. HBD
 b. DB
 c. RAJU
 d. Brazil, Argentina
 e. PEAKY BLINDERS

The data also shows that there are both normal and figurative language used in graffiti. Example (6) shows normal language and example (7) shows figurative language.

- (6) Ensure women's safety everywhere.
 (7) CAN'T WE STOP CRYING

Where there is a complete sentence in a graffiti, it may be simple (declarative, interrogative, imperative), compound or complex. Example (8) present simple declarative sentences, example (9) shows simple interrogative sentence, and example (10) illustrates simple imperative sentence. Example (11) presents a compound sentence whereas example (12) shows a complex sentence.

- (8) a. Everybody deserves a house.
 b. Education is not a commodity
- (9) Why are we living
- (10) a. USE ME
 b. Plant trees,

(11) GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE, I WANNA GROW UP ONCE AGAIN

(12) "যে দেশে গুণের সমাদর নেই, সে দেশে গুণী জন্মাতে পারে না" - ডঃ মুহাম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ।

"ye deśe guṇera samādara nei, se deśe guṇī janmāte pāre nā" - *Da Muhāmmada Śahīdullāha*

"If a country does not value its learned sons, it will stop begetting learned sons."

3.1.3 Language as a tool

The writer or artists used various modality to communicate their meanings to get across their target audience. So, the use of language featured very strongly in their art. Such use of language accords with what is said by Fairclough (1995) that through language use, the identities, beliefs, relations come out and it has also the transformative significance. A close look at the collected graffiti reveal that the writer manipulated the power of language as a tool to communicate their messages. Some of them used not their own language, but borrowed quotes from the famous poets, social reformers or leaders to appeal to the people. For instance, a quote from famous Bengali modern poet Samsur Rahman is presented in example (13).

(13) "আমি ধর্মের বিরুদ্ধে নই কিন্তু ধর্মজ্ঞতার বিরুদ্ধে" - কবি শামসুর রাহমান

"āmi dharmera biruddhe nai kintu dharmandhatāra biruddhe" - *Kabi Śāmasura Rāhamāna*

"I am not against religion but against bigotry" - Poet Shamsur Rahman

While an excerpt by Begum Rokeya was used to emphasize the importance female education for the sustainable development of the country as in (14).

(14) "আমরা সমাজেরই অর্ধাঙ্গ, আমরা পড়িয়া থাকিলে সমাজ উঠিবে কি রূপে?" - বেগম রোকেয়া সাখাওয়াত হোসেন

"āmarā samājerai ardhāṅga āmarā pariā thākile samāja ūthibe ki rūpe?" - *Begama Rokeā Sākhāoāta Hosena*

"We are half of the society, how will the society rise, if we lag behind?" - Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain

Sometimes the graffitists used a variety of forms to reach their target people such as prose, poetry, full sentences, phrases, rhetorical questions, and different languages such as English and Bangla as can be seen in the examples in section 3.1.2.

3.2 Contents in graffiti

I noticed a variety of topics in the graffiti of Chittagong. Some common topics found were politics, reminiscences of glorious and tragic past incidents, taboos, gang culture, self-identity, branding of Chittagong and local past heroes, environment, and expression of love. The following section discuss on three topics among them, namely ornamentation and reminiscences, politics, and expression of romance and identity.

3.2.1 Ornamentation and reminiscences of the glorious past

Graffiti collected from different parts of Chittagong town had diverse topics. The street arts in Jamal Khan served the double purposes of ornamentation and remembering the glorious past of Bangladesh, especially the contribution of local heroes of Chittagong in the history of the undivided subcontinent, undivided Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Some of the graffiti reveal how local sons of Chittagong made their supreme sacrifices by laying down their lives to protest against the oppression and suppression of the British colonizers ruling in the subcontinent. For instance, a quote by Masterda Surya Sen in (15) contains the spirit of how revolution would spread over the subcontinent.

(15) "বিপ্লবের যে ঢেউ সৃষ্টি হয়েছে চট্টগ্রামের সীমাবদ্ধ পরিসরে, তা দেশের সীমানা ছাড়িয়ে বাইরে আনাচে কানাচে ছড়িয়ে পড়বে" - মাস্টারদা সূর্যসেন।

"biplabera ye dheu sṛṣṭi haeche caṭṭagrāmera sīmābaddha parisare, tā deśera sīmānā chārie bāire ānāce kānāce charie parbe" - *Māstārādā Sūryasena*

"The wave of revolution that has been created in the limited area of Chittagong, will spread the beyond the borders of the country" – Masterda Surya Sen.

Similarly, some other art works in the same areas proudly showcase the contribution of local heroes in Chittagong in turbulent times of 1952 and 1971. For example, a wall writing containing the tempo of the language movement in 1952 read as “*Our language is our pride, our language is our hope; The blood of language martyrs will not go in vain.*” The graffiti gratefully commemorate the contribution of past heroes of Chittagong and reflect the attitudes of the graffitiists towards the golden sons.

Another predominant theme found in graffiti is remembering the war heroes, their contribution, and sacrifices led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation. The bloody incident mentioned in the earlier paragraph and discrimination, misrule by Pakistani junta, many occurrences of injustice faced by general people prepared the ground for all-out war between the both parts of Pakistan and Mujib, the legendary leader of East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) gave a historical fiery speech on March 7, 1971 and urged the people to be ready to make any sacrifice freedom demanded and a wall writing in Jamal Khan Road presented in (16) carried this spirit.

- (16) “এবারের সংগ্রাম আমাদের মুক্তির সংগ্রাম, এবারের সংগ্রাম স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম” - শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।
“ebāreṛa saṅgrāma āmādera muktira saṅgrāma, ebāreṛa saṅgrāma sbādhīnatāra saṅgrāma” - Śekha Mujibura Rahamāna
 “The struggle this time, is a struggle for our liberty. the struggle this time is a struggle for our independence” - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

With the declaration of independence in March 26, the war between West Pakistan and East Pakistan officially started, which gradually turned out to be very deadly, catastrophic, and destructive, specially from the perspective of Bangladesh. So, the street artists through their graffiti captured the chanting of slogans, preparation of the war, the huge participation of people in the war, the sacrifice made by young people, the signing of surrender by Pakistani military leaders and express their gratitude towards the war heroes and their leaders. The

portraits of martyrs presented in Figure 1 remind us of their sacrifice in the liberation war. This use of graffiti to generate meaning making process and communicate crucial historical incidents to young generation and to the world confirms Toenjes’s (2015) stance on the usage of graffiti in the context of Palestine as a medium of protest and communication.

A significant aspect that found its way in graffiti in Chittagong is branding Chittagong and its celebrities in the past. Under this category, a good collection of wall writing and street arts reveal the famous places, legendary musicians, artists, social reformers, philanthropists, spiritual leaders, women leaders, teachers, and academicians.

The emergence and existence of graffiti for the purpose of ornamentation as a relatively acceptable practice confirms the theoretical stance taken by Schacter (2016), Brighenti (2016), and Macdonald (2016). Like the claim made by Schacter (2016) graffiti in Chittagong has established itself as a means of ornamentation and linked with the order of city life. Besides, the changed notion of graffiti from an invisible value-neutral art to a value-bestowing art form is also applicable in the case of Chittagong as this art is considered to be an acceptable part of city life. Finally, the theoretical position of Pabon and Macdonald (2016) finds manifestation in images found in the graffiti of Chittagong. A close look at the graffiti on the street of Jamal Khan area reveals that most of the images belong to the male celebrities but only a few of them to female. Also, as the wall writings and images are drawn invisible, particularly at night, it can be assumed that most of the art works are portrayed by male graffitiists.

3.2.2 Politics in wall writing

Grffiti related to politics is widespread in Chittagong. To detail, the quotes are targeted to arouse patriotism, eliminate gender discrimination and establish gender equality, urge people to raise their voices against oppression, make people aware about the permanence of soul and decadence of body, the caged stage of soul within body, the beauty of rustic life, need for self-less

leadership, and the need for spread of art and culture in society. They also contain a lot moral lessons with a view to bringing changes in society and encouraging people to behave in a particular way to endure human welfare. For instance, the following excerpt (17) by the poet Sufia Kamal expresses her patriotism and her desire to die in this country.

- (17) *জন্মেছি মাগো তোমার কোলেতে, মরি যেন এই দেশে* -
সুফিয়া কামাল
"janmechi māgo tomāra kolete mari yena ei deśe" - *Suphiā Kāmāla*
 "I was born in this country and I wish I could die here" - Sufia Kamal

Most of the writings and images showcase Mujib, his role and contribution in the liberation war and the pre and post war Bangladesh. The existing ruling party established by Mujib has been in power for more than fifteen years at a stretch. The nexus between the absence of graffiti by the opposition party and the excessive presence of graffiti by the ruling party and its student wing on the walls of educational institutions such Chittagong College and cultural institution like Shilpokola Academy is not difficult to establish. Example (18) captures the moment when Sheik Mujib returned from the prison house of West Pakistan in 1972.

- (18) *বাংলার মহানায়কের স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন - ১৯৭২*
bāmlāra mahānāyakerā sbadeśa
pratyābartana - 1972
 "The arrival of legendary leader Mujib - 1972."

Besides, some graffiti belonging to other political parties who share almost same ideologies with the ruling party were found on the walls of private property. These writings protest against terrorism in education institutions, construction of a private hospital endorsed by government in public place, commodification education in private universities, treaty between government and multinational companies giving the latter sole authority on the gas and petrol mine of the country. Finally, some graffiti found on the walls that are diametrically opposite in ideologies urged people to change state order and to establish Islamic regime in the country and some others asked people to

accelerate the class struggle movement and establish communism in the country.

A related type of graffiti found was aimed at social reforms and making demands with the identity of graffiti visible or invisible. Some demanded ensuring job opportunities for all and while other asking for housing for all. Again, some other artists encouraged people to protect environment by planting more trees and take precaution against the spread of Covid-19 (see example 12). In addition, some graffiti asked for security for women in all spheres of life. Also, some other graffiti reflect dissatisfaction, deprivation, meaninglessness of life and demand another chance in life to grow and shine. They fit into Lennon's (2016) hobo graffiti of the subculture in USA and through their writings, they express their anger, grumbings and existential anguish and their disenfranchised states. Such art works as a means of protest and discontent corroborate the observation of Ross (2016) and Taylor et al. (2016) in the context of USA to voice protest against unemployment and to get social recognition from peers.

3.2.3 Expression of romance and identity

A common pattern in graffiti is the expression of love and identity through wall writings. The researcher found many ambiguous signs and images such as "M+A", "M+O", "M+T", on the walls of various places such as public parks, schools, colleges and even the surface of water tanks. In Bangladeshi culture, premarital love between a boy and a girl still considered a taboo and not accepted in society and family easily. So young lovers try to express or immortalize their love following the tradition of Bangla movies by writing or inscribing their names on the walls, stones, or the barks of the trees. Apart from this, some symbols with or without images such as "JRMBS", "<A", "PLEAKY BLINDERS, X gang", were also noticed by the researcher. Not unlike the traits of American subculture expressed by hobo graffiti in Lennon (2016), these invisible entities or groups made an attempt to make their identities known through the use of graffiti and voice their anger, resistance, parasitic existence, and dissatisfaction with life and sense of bonding and

belonging. Finally, these art works help us to understand city like from a different perspective and notice the subtle changes the city is undergoing as also perceived by Evans (2016), who observes that urban graffiti provides us with a new perspective to look at city life.

4. Conclusion and implications

Built on a qualitative research method, the current study outlines the findings of research on the graffiti in Chittagong by analyzing their language and content. Not unlike many other studies carried out in many other parts of the world, the researcher found out that here in Chittagong, the graffitiists used a variety of means such as images, images accompanied by either English or Bangla writing, words and phrases, rhetorical devices like rhetoric questions and metaphors, prose and poetry and various types of sentences such as interrogatives, affirmative and imperatives to effectively to articulate their inner thoughts.

And some typical themes utilized in the graffiti of Chittagong were demands for social reforms, expression of political and religious affiliation, expression of love and romance, criticisms of existing ruling party, patriotism and the reminiscences of the glorious past and commemoration of the golden sons of Chittagong and Bangladesh.

Through this study, it can be assumed that the graffiti art in general and graffiti in Chittagong in particular, may have important implications for educators, linguists, text book writers, social scientists, and designers of courses working in this area or elsewhere as crucial teaching and learning materials. In other words, Graffiti should have a space in curriculum so that students from diverse disciplines, levels and backgrounds can be aware of the embedded values in the graffiti, the rationale behind them, the designing skills, and the multimodal and semiotic codes underlying the graffiti. The adroit and judicious incorporation of the art form in different disciplines such as linguistics, social science, anthropology, and second language teaching among others tend to sharpen the critical thinking skills of learners by

opening up their eyes to multiple means of expressions, use of signs or codes and the underlying reasons for portraying them, linguistic diversity and ethnicity, language variety and social issues and concerns.

Besides, this study might have implications for text book writers of primary and secondary schools as students may like bright colors used in writings and images and they can have the exposure to real objects and can learn through the realia, which might trigger their interests and improve their literacy skills. The other types of graffiti such as graffiti in private and public vehicles, public toilets in different public and private institutions and these topics could be rich areas of research.

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