

Graffiti Writing and Its Likely Influence on English Language Learning in Selected Secondary Schools in the Larger Laikipia East District, Laikipia County, Kenya

Francis Gichuki Mwangi, Agnes W. Gathumbi and Adelheid M. Bwire

Abstract

Graffiti takes the form of written language whose authorship always remains anonymous. It precisely refers to any wall writing, pictures and symbols or markings of any kind on any surface anywhere no matter what motivates the writer. Most graffiti are viewed as illegal or vandalism of property by those in authority. Secondary school students use graffiti as a form of communication when they feel other channels to express themselves, have been blocked by those in authority. The study aimed at identifying the communicative strategies employed in graffiti writing and the influence of graffiti on learning of English language and classroom learning environment in our schools. Graffiti texts were collected in ten secondary schools purposively sampled in the Larger Laikipia East District in Laikipia County. Out of one thousand graffiti texts collected, two hundred were randomly sampled for analysis. Twenty English teachers were purposively sampled to take part in an interview. One hundred students were randomly sampled to fill in questionnaires. A Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was carried out with another group of five students randomly sampled across the classes in each school. The data collected from this exercise were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to arrive at inferences and conclusions. The study used a sociolinguistic approach to the study of graffiti. The study was guided by General System Theory. The findings of the study were that students used varied communicative strategies like humour, symbolism, irony, short forms, acronyms and abbreviations in their graffiti writings. It was also established that teachers expressed varied opinions that graffiti influenced learning of English language and classroom learning environment in secondary schools. The findings of this research may contribute to the study of sociolinguistics in general and communication in schools in particular. It has been established that students use graffiti to communicate a lot of information that would be beneficial to the head teachers, quality assurance officers, students' counsellors, policy makers and other stakeholders. Classroom teachers may also use graffiti to establish the unspoken students problems and behaviour and thus prevent entropy of the school system.

Key Words: Graffiti, Sociolinguistics

Full text: <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/13507>