

**GRAFFITI PERSPECTIVE ON MATATUS IN KENYA  
A LEXICO-PRAGMATIC THEORY "**

**BY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES  
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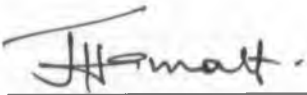
## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



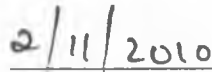
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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.



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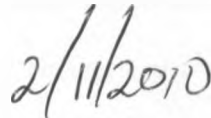


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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear parents

Charles Onchiri Ochari (Late)

And

Mary Mong'ina Onchiri

They opened up this journey for me. It would never have been possible without their vision.

My wife, Salome Nyasuguta Oganda, who encouraged me to continue studying even when children had reached school-going age.

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You know what you mean to me. May the Lord bless you for being tolerant and go beyond this level!

## ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a linguistic study in graffiti on Matatus in Kenya. The study adopted the theoretical framework of Lexical Pragmatics. The main purpose of the study was to investigate and analyse the linguistic elements in graffiti perspective on Matatus.

The objectives of the study were to analyse intentionality, communicative effectiveness and the role of context in understanding graffiti on matatus and to establish whether Lexical Pragmatics theory can be used in the analysis of graffiti on matatus. The study revealed that Lexical Pragmatics theory adequately accounts for the successful interpretation of graffiti on matatus. The results revealed further that effective communication in graffiti rely on context for effective interpretation.

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the introduction of the study. It highlights the introductory elements of the study; its background, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, rationale, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, literature review, methodology and significance of study.

Chapter two discusses the linguistic description of graffiti and lays a foundational starting point of graffiti while chapter three discusses the concepts and tenets in understanding graffiti intentionality, communicative value and the role of context. Chapter four tests the theory. It subjects the collected data into the Lexical Pragmatics adjustment processes and finds out if it can adequately analyze data. Chapter five concludes the study by providing the general overview of the study and recommends for further study. The findings of the study revealed that graffiti can be analyzed in any multilingual set up, that is, English, Kiswahili, and Sheng.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides introductory overview information on the topic of study. It includes information on the development of graffiti writings, research problem, objectives, research hypotheses, rationale, scope and limitation. It also looks at the theoretical framework on which the study is based, literature review, the research methodology adopted in the study and subsequent significance of the study.

### 1.1 Development of Graffiti Writings

The word 'graffito' (sg.), graffiti (pl.) originally referred to a drawing or inscription scratched on an ancient wall, the writings found in Pompeii, Greece. In the present century, graffiti has come to be known and used for any spontaneous, and unauthorised writings or drawing on walls, vehicles, and other public places (Crystal 1995: 181).

More research reveals that 'graffiti and graffito' are from the Italian word 'graffiato' (scratched). Graffiti is applied in art history to works of art produced by scratching a design into a surface. It involves scratching through one layer of pigment to reveal another beneath it. Potters who would glaze their wares and then scratch a design on it used this technique. In ancient times, graffiti was carved on walls with a sharp object, sometimes chalk or coal was used.

Crystal (1995:181) observes that graffiti is typically obscene or political in character, but a great deal of humour and popular wisdom content has formed the basis of several collections by folklorists, artistes and humorists.

According to Crystal, graffiti are often occasionally, in character responding to current events and preoccupation such as an election or a famous scandal.

Most graffiti, however, bear no relation to a particular time or place; most authorship is anonymous in nature. That is, the same themes recur over the years and become favourite formulae of the graffiti writers (p. 181). This is demonstrated by the many art forms in places of work, lavatories, learning institutions, tunnels, buildings and vehicles. Graffiti bears no specific writer, time or place.

Coulmas (1996) describes graffiti as writing or drawing scratched on a wall or other surface such as inscriptions that contain quotations from poets, salutations, idle words, obscenities, love addresses and satirical remarks. Consider this example from (Coulmas 1996: 170-171).

*Surda sit oranti tua*

*Audiat exclusi verba*

*Ianitor addantis vigilet*

*Surdus in obduction*

*Gloss*

‘Commanding watchman to keep door closed to him who begs, but to open it to him who gives- a reference to a Roman brothel.’

Daniels and Bright (1996) attributes the historical background of graffiti to the alphabet which had more than one hundred inscriptions and graffiti from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E., which was also based on a variant of the ancient Greek script of Gothic. The later will be of little significance to this study, that is, Gothic.

Crystal (1997:181) describes graffiti as any type of public markings that may appear in the forms of simple written words to elaborate wall paintings.

Crystal (1995) further notes that two of the longest standing graffiti are 'Kilroy' and 'Chad' both of world War II origin, and still being drawn around the world in the 1990s (p. 181). 'Kilroy and Chad' were the first graffiti to have been written. 'Kilroy' began in America and may have been a Massachusetts shipyard inspector, James Kilroy, who in 1941 was marking the phrase on equipment to show that he had checked it. On the other hand, he may have been a sergeant, Francis Kilroy whose arrival at a Florida air base was anticipated by the notice, 'Kilroy was here next week.' 'Chad' also known as Mr. Chad appeared in Britain early in the war, always accompanied by a standard phrase of the type 'Wot, No---'. The name 'Chad' was chiefly, Royal Air Force', 'Private Snoops', 'The army equivalent' and 'The watcher', often found in the navy. This study will deal with words or fragment sentences (texts) that are found on Matatus.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

Little has so far been done in graffiti writings locally. However, it is worth noting that the little that has been done is insightful on graffiti writings. Cole (1991) is very instrumental in the study of graffiti writings. He carried out research at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, USA, whereby the graffiti writings on the toilet wall were used by women to share thoughts (it was women who were aggrieved). The choice of the toilet made it appropriate for them to express themselves. The toilet also offered them as 'authors' a sense of anonymity and security of their identities, because the graffiti they were dealing with was considered highly inflammatory and

potentially explosive, that is, writings that was against authority rules. Graffiti was anti-government.

Nwoye (1993) also did a study on graffiti, where he observes that it acts as an avenue through which a minority group, most often in an oppressive situation, can express their opinions. This was the case of Nigerian university students. The choice of the lavatories was used as they afforded the 'authors' relative privacy in which to express their views without fear (p. 421).

Bruner and Kelso (1980:241) note that because individuals write graffiti where others can see them, they are a form of (public) communication. This study therefore intends to use matatus as an avenue of public communication.

Yieke (2003) focuses on graffiti found all over the walls in Kenyan universities. In her findings, she notes that over 200 graffiti deal with social, economic and academic issues that sensitized and provided information about the social issues that affect students, thus reading graffiti was one way to do so. Yieke (2003) cited in Creighton et al. (2006:54).For example:

We are suffering

Can u face our problems?      'Can you face our problems?'

Just talk and talk and nothing

Yieke (2006) outlines how graffiti acts as communication avenues for women at the work place that is, EPZ. She examines how women in the workplace experience many problems and forms of discrimination. Creighton et al. (2006:49).

Nwoye (1993: 419) cited in Creighton et al (2006: 49) observes that wall writings have been used for a long time in human history to record and preserve the activities of humankind. Graffiti is still used in the field of advertising and such related domains. [Nevertheless] wall writing is no longer a method of preserving records by mainstream society. She, (Yieke) uses a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Bruner and Kelso (1980) in their *'Dender Differences in Graffiti'* employ a Semiotic Perspective.

This study intends to use a Lexico-Pragmatic theory that has not been used by any of the earlier researchers in its analysis of graffiti.

Kinyatti (2002) focuses on language and gender; she talks of graffiti in passing from a point of view of how women are demeaned.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Graffiti is rich domain area whose exploration linguistically has extensively been ignored. No adequate study has been undertaken in accounting for the linguistic elements in graffiti on Matatus so far, locally, apart from Yieke (2002, 2003, and 2006) that dealt on lavatory graffiti. This study therefore seeks to investigate the linguistic elements of graffiti on Matatus and fill the knowledge gap that widely exists, In addition to this, very little if any systematic research has been carried out to bear these important aspects of graffiti perspective meaning, which is the core of communication.

The basic items to be investigated in this study can therefore be summarized into one broad question as:

Are there any linguistic intentionality and communicative effectiveness in graffiti writings on Matatus?

This broad question can be split into the following specific research questions.



1. What is the intentionality of graffiti writings on matatus?
2. What is the communicative effectiveness of graffiti writings on matatus?
3. What role does context play in understanding graffiti writings on matatus?
4. How Lexico-Pragmatic theory does abridges the gap between the concept encoded by a word and the concept expressed by use of that word on a particular occasion in graffiti writings on matatus?

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The study aims at investigating linguistic intentionality and communicative value elements of graffiti writings in matatus.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

In order to respond to the above questions, the study will be guided by the following objectives.

1. To analyse the linguistic intentionality of graffiti writings on matatus.
2. To establish the communicative value of graffiti writings on matatus.
3. To analyse the role of context in understanding graffiti on matatus.
4. To determine how Lexico-Pragmatic theory abridges the gap between the concept encoded by a word and the concept expressed by use of that, graffiti word on matatus.

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

In view of the statement of the problem and the objectives, this study will test the following hypotheses:

1. There are linguistic intentions (messages) of graffiti writings on matatus.

2. There is communicative effectiveness of graffiti on matatus.
3. Graffiti is context sensitive, if used in text.
4. Lexico-Pragmatic theory sufficiently abridges the gap between the concept encoded by a word and the concept expressed by use of that graffiti text on a particular occasion on matatus.

### **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

This study is important in terms of its contribution to both theoretical linguistics and textual writings in general. In relation to theoretical linguistics, the study seeks to unfold the strengths of lexical pragmatics theory. The theory is recent and seeks to analyse texts within the interface of semantic and pragmatics.

Written language is the most neglected aspect of linguistic study as the majority of research focuses on historical and theoretical aspects of spoken language. Even studies devoted to [graffiti] writing systems generally place little emphasis on the [text] themselves, limiting coverage to the external history of writing systems Daniels and Bright (1996). This study hence is important as it shows the intentionality and communicative effect of graffiti writings. It also shows that the processes of lexical pragmatic are applicable in graffiti writings. This study is a premier one to be done locally on matatus.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation**

Graffiti is broad and refers to a wide range of activities. This study sets out to investigate the intentionality and communicative value of graffiti on matatus. Therefore, other aspects of phonology, morphology, and syntax will not be dealt with. We are concerned with the lexical pragmatic issues. We also do not intend to concern ourselves in giving a full presentation of the semantics of the graffiti; rather we are

concerned with the determination of intentionality, communicative effectiveness and role of context in interpretation of meaning only.

On the choice of data, we will exclude an analysis of the graffiti on washroom walls, stairways, tunnels, abandoned building walls, rocks and tree stumps. Instead, we will concern ourselves on graffiti found on the interior and exterior walls of matatus, seats of these vehicles, dusty scribbled windows, and more importantly graffiti on abandoned vehicles in garages, and accident towed vehicles in police stations and park yards. Since graffiti is too broad to cover within the period of a semester, we intend to concern ourselves to specific graffiti that is, graffiti with great deal of straightforward praise, invective, well-known quotations or slogans, puns and word play and to large amounts of obscenities and dirty jokes.

In this study, we do not intend to provide a complete exposition of Lexical Pragmatics theory. We will limit it to only to those processes and principles of the theory that relate to graffiti writings. Under lexical broadening, we will apply approximation, metaphorical extension, and category extension. Neologism will be referred to for clarity purposes and if data demand it.

The data will be collected from the texts on matatus. The data will be analyzed using the Lexical Pragmatics theory, and not any other approach.

It is also worthy noting that, we entirely deal with matatus operating on various routes in Nairobi's Eastlands. That is, route numbers 19, 60, 23, 32, 42,17a, 58, 19c, 18c, 14, 28, 9 and 6. We will exclude all other Nairobi routes. This is convenient purposive sampling for this present study.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Lexical Pragmatics theory, which is discussed below.

### **1.8.1 Lexical Pragmatics Theory**

In this present study, we will use the lexical pragmatics theoretical framework as the tool of analysis. Lexical Pragmatics theory was proposed and developed by Reinhard Blutner in 1990s. It consists of two theories paired into a single theory i.e. Lexical Semantics and Conversational Implicatures. The approach combines a constrained-based semantics with a general mechanism of conversational implicature as already stated. Lexical Pragmatics theory was later on expounded by other scholars (Carston 1997, 2002); Blutner (1998, 2002) and Wilson 2003) who filled up inadequacies in the theory.

Lexical Pragmatics is a research field that tries to give a systematic and explanatory account of pragmatics phenomena that are connected with the semantic under-specification of lexical items as those found in graffiti on matatu (internet).

The aim of linguistic pragmatic is to provide an explicit account of utterance-interpretation, how sentence fragments and ungrammatical (texts) are interpreted, how contextual and encyclopedic knowledge is brought to bear, (Sperber and Wilson 1981). For example, the I-principle, which states that 'Do not make your contributions more informative than is required'. This was later fine-tuned by Levinson in what he called informativeness principle, which states;

Amplify the informational content of the speakers' utterance by finding the most specific interpretation up to what you judge to be the speaker's m-intended point. Wilson (2006/2007:3).

The speaker's m-intended point' refers to the speakers' overtly intended meaning and hence to either narrowing or broadening processes involved in this theory. It is arguably seen that there is a distinctive borderline between lexical and pragmatics thus combining the interface of semantics under-specification in the lexicon with a theory of pragmatics i.e. context. It is therefore made up of lexical semantics and lexical pragmatics, Blutner (1998).

It is against this backdrop that the theory of Lexical Pragmatics handles notions such as Lexical semantics, nature of concepts and role in communication and cognition, acquisition of word meanings and their processing, and the development of lexical-pragmatic abilities. This theory therefore has the capacity, relevant concepts and appropriate descriptive tools in the analysis of the graffiti data in the study.

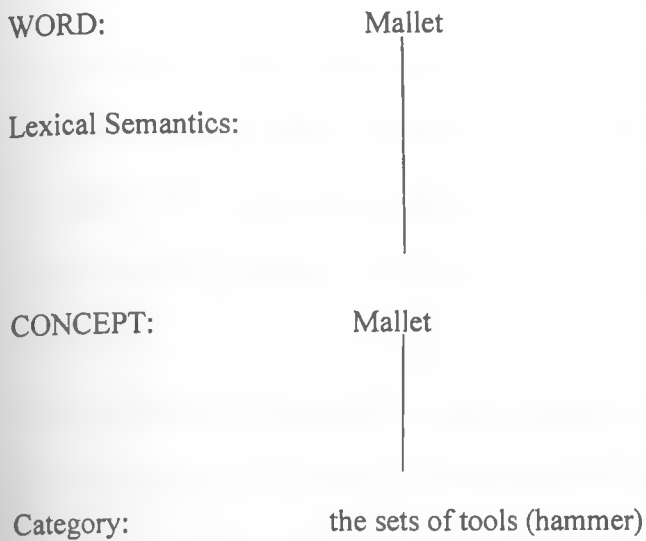
### **1.8.1 Lexical Semantics**

In lexical semantics, it is how and what the words of a language denote (Pustejovsky 1995). Words may either be taken to denote things in the world, or concepts, depending on the particular approach.

Lexical semantics explores whether the meaning of a lexical unit is established by looking at its neighbourhood in the semantic net, that is, stock lexicon, (by looking at the other words it occurs with in natural sentences) or if the meaning is already locally contained in the lexical unit. Pustejovsky(1995).

Lexical semantics is concerned with the meaning of the smallest parts of linguistic expressions that are assumed to bear meaning as in graffiti.

## Model of lexical semantics



**Figure 1 Model of lexical semantics (Adapted from: Sperber( 2003))**

The ideal significance of lexical semantics is to study the relation between words and the mentally represented concepts they represent. With pragmatics a word does not necessarily represent the same concept it encodes, it picks different properties. Moreover, this study seeks to find out if graffiti encodes different senses. Nevertheless, in the above instance, a word represents the same concept it encodes.

### 1.8.3 Lexical Pragmatics

In lexical pragmatics, there are two main processes involved in which the concept communicated by use of a word may differ from the concept encoded (intention and communication). These processes are.

- a. Narrowing
- b. Broadening

### 1.8.3.1 Lexical Narrowing

Lexical narrowing is where a word is used in a more specific sense than the encoded one, resulting in a narrowing of the linguistically-specified denotation (Munge 2009) Wilson and Carston (2007:23) suggest that 'lexical interpretation typically involves the construction of an ad hoc concept or occasion-specific sense, based on interaction among encoded concepts, contextual information and pragmatic expectations or principles'.

Barsalou (1987, 1993) describes 'ad hoc' concept as proto typical term in a particular situation picks out a subset of prototypical or stereotypical category members. Sometimes, it may emerge that the actual meaning of a word is indeed context and discourse dependent.

Glucksberg et al. realized that either ad hoc construction process could be a narrowing or broadening of the linguistically specific meaning, so the communicated concept may be either more specific or more general than the encoded concept.

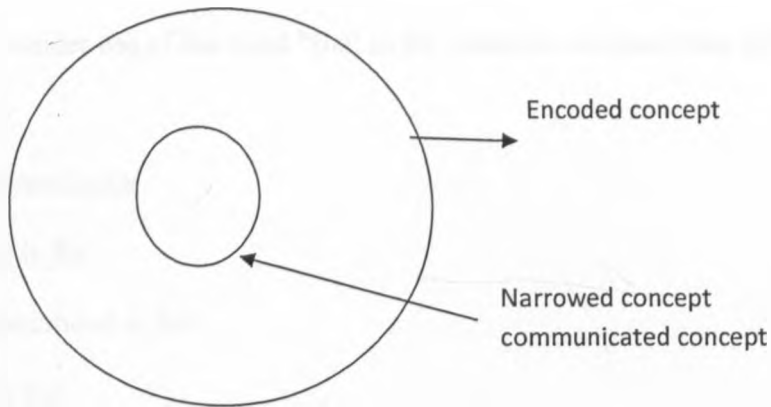
The interpretation process of either narrowing or broadening fine-tunes almost every word.

Semantics plays the role of proving the different shades of meaning attached to a word while Lexical Pragmatics helps one to narrow to the required specific understanding of the sense in particular situation it is [written on] (Munge 2009:10).

Narrowing is triggered by search of relevance and following a path of least effort choosing the most accessible narrowing and the most accessible contextual implications (Wilson 2006/2007). It involves mutual adjustment of contextual assumptions, explicit content and cognitive effects in order to satisfy the expectations

of communicative relevance raised by a word or communicated concept. Narrowing therefore stops when the expectations are satisfied or abandoned.

### General Descriptions of Narrowing



**Figure 2 General Description of Narrowing (adopted from Sperber)**

What this shows is that a single lexical items 'Delamare' that encodes a general concept, gets specified/narrowed/fine-tuned in slightly different ways in different contexts. The individual meaning also comes, about in discourse context and pragmatic expectation (Sperber and Wilson 2002).

#### 1.8.3.2 Lexical Broadening

Simply put refers to a word used to convey a more general sense than the encoded one, with sense becoming broader than the encoded one. There is widening of the linguistically specified denotation. Munge (2009: 11).

There is approximation, metaphorical and categorial extension as sub-varieties of broadening.



### 1.8.3.2.1 Approximation

This involves the use of a word in a more strict sense to penumbra of case that strictly speaking falls outside its linguistically specified denotation or meaning. Put differently, a word with a strict sense is marginally extended, used more loosely than one that is not. Consider use of the word “flat’ in the examples adopted from (Munge 2009:1).

- a. The iron board is *flat*
- b. My garden is *flat*
- c. My neighbourhood is *flat*
- d. My beer is *flat*
- e. The earth is *flat*.

These examples have different interpretations of the word ‘flat’ which vary in degrees and type of approximations of the context the words are used in, the same applies to words in graffiti.

### 1.8.3.2.2. Metaphorical Extension

This involves a more radical type of broadening which allows the communicated concept to depart much further from the encoded concept. Consider the word ‘Delamere is here’

- A man known as Delamere is with us.
- Milk products associated with Delamere are here.
- Farming is with us.
- Killer grandson of Delamere is here. (Tom Cholmondoley)

The meaning 'killer grandson' is a metaphorical extension of the word 'Delamere' since it departs much further from the meaning of the word or sentence and the extended meaning is only and only obtained in context the word is used in.

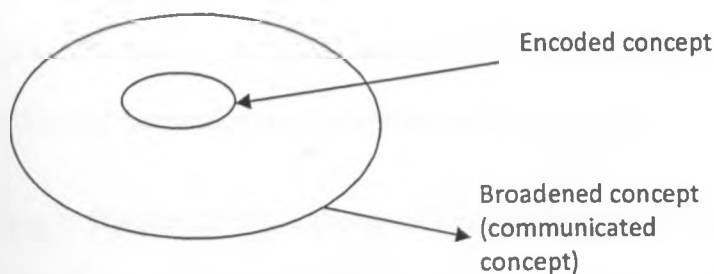
#### **1.8.3.2.3 Categorical Extension**

This involves a further variety of broadening which occurs often with brand names to denote broader categories of a concept encoded. Consider:

'Hoover,' 'xerox,' 'sellotape', which denotes vacuum cleaner, photocopies and sticky tape respectively.

With all these cars and factories China is the new US.

The concept 'US' might convey the ad hoc concept 'US' which may be extended to world's biggest energy user.



**Figure 3 General descriptions of Broadening (adapted from Shroeder)**

### 1.9 Literature Review

The literature review in this study is divided into four parts. The first part consists of the theoretical literature review. The second part consists of literature review on graffiti while the third part consists of literature related to pragmatics while the fourth is on general writings.

#### 1.9.1 Review of Theoretical Literature

In this section, the descriptive development of the theory is discussed. McCawley (1978) proposed the basic idea of lexical pragmatics. He argued that ‘a lexical item and a syntactically complex equivalent of it may make different contributions to its semantic structure’ McCawley (1978:257). He postulated that there was need to formulate idiosyncratic restrictions that must be incorporated into the lexical entries in order to restrict the system of interpretations.

He therefore suggested a division of labour between semantics and pragmatics in investigating the mechanism by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use.

Blutner in his article in the *Journal of Semantics* (1998) refined the idea of Lexical Pragmatics. Essentially, Lexical Pragmatics consisted at that time two theories namely, Lexical Semantics and Conversational Implicature.

According to Blutner (1998), a theory of Lexical Semantics is based on the meaning of words and meaning relationships, and words according to this theory are assigned semantic features or semantic distinguishers existing in the lexicon. In addition, lexical semantics has to be understood in its “classical” sense as a truth-functional, static semantics of lexical items. From a Gricean perspective, two different ideas of how to overcome the divergence between the classical items and the natural language demands come to mind (p.2).

The conceptual core of lexical pragmatics demands a straight formulation of conversational implicature. Paired with the idea of semantic under-specification in the lexicon and an appropriate representation of contextual and encyclopedic knowledge, this conception avoids both unmotivated lexical ambiguities and coercion mechanisms (Blutner 1998:2). Words are grouped into semantic classes, organized in the occurrence of semantic properties, and organized from the presence or absence of a feature (Munge 2009:16).

The theory of conversational implicatures, was developed from William James lectures (1965). Grice, in his paper “*logic and conversation*” (1975) endeavored to outline it as a theory of implicatures. Grice’s theory is an attempt to explain how the learner gets meaning from what is meant [intention], from the level of expressed meaning [explicit] to the level of implied meaning [implicit].

Grice, therefore, provided a framework for the interpretation of utterance where he points out that, knowing what the speaker actually said in producing a particular

utterance, knows what sense or referent was intended (Levinson 1983: 101). Grice then came up with four conversation maxims that help one to determine what the implicature might be.

These refinements then in conversational implicatures theory led to Neo-Gricean theory. The conversation maxims through integration and unification were reduced to Q-principle and I-principle, Atlas and Levinson (1997:75).

It is important to note that more adjustments were made in the Gricean approach and thus giving rise to the subsequent development of lexical pragmatics theory in (Carston 2002), Wilson (2003) and Wilson and Sperber (2002) which now comprises of Lexical Semantics and Lexical Pragmatics, our approach in this study.

Lexical pragmatics will provide an explanatory way and try to give a systematic account of the phenomena under discussion, especially in this present study of graffiti.

### **1.9.1 Literature Review on Graffiti.**

It is interesting to note that not much has been done on graffiti. It is evident that no work has been carried out in graffiti Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, Phonetics, Morphosyntax, and Semantics. Graffiti has only been studied in Literature and History.

Daniels and Bright (1996) notes that overlaps of lines in poetry graffiti indicate in which order and direction the signs were drawn...uneven distribution of the text on the available writing space... They go further to depict the Lydian alphabet, attested in more than 100 inscription and graffiti from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E, and is based on a variant of the ancient Greek script of graffiti. This will form a strong basis in this study especially on the appropriate choice of graffiti text. Coulmas (1996:170 - 171) talks of ancient graffiti in Latin from a wall in Pompeii, 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE. The four

lines on the wall are fragmented verses...which command a watchman to keep the door closed to him who begs but to open it to him who gives- a reference to a Roman brothel. This is important to the current study, as it will help in generating correct texts or sentence fragments in graffiti. Coulmas (1996) further gives a concise definition of graffiti as writing or drawing on a wall or other surface....as the wall inscription...contain quotations, salutations idle words, obscenities, love addresses and satirical remarks. This is quite insightful to this study guiding us on specifics on graffiti on matatus.

Skaffari et al. (2005:27) demonstrates that graffiti is not advertisement as it lacks the main features that make advertisement successful. This helps us to estrange this study from the advertisement perspective.

Crystal (1997:55) clearly illustrates and provides exemplification of some linguistic distinct graffiti. This informs our study greatly and avoids deviations from what graffiti is all about (examples on graffiti refer 1.3)

Crystal (1995:181) has also provided a definition of graffiti and what contents of graffiti writings to consider, that is, found as in walls, vehicles, public places and which are obscenities or political in character, great deal of humour and popular wisdom. He further tells us that graffiti are often occasionally, in characteristic responding to current events and preoccupations, a characteristic feature of graffiti. This forms a fundamental guiding instrument in this study.

Nwoye (1993) in his study on wall writings provides both an archaeological and anthropological usefulness of graffiti as a source of human history in recording and presentation of activities. This will motivate this current study, as it will also concentrate on writings on walls of matatus.

Cole (1991) is too insightful on graffiti. He carried research at the University of Illinois, urban Champaign, whereby women to air thoughts used the toilet (washroom) wall. Although confined to washroom graffiti, the study will avail necessary procedures in identifying the required data from the matatus.

Bruner and Kelso (1980), notes that individuals write graffiti where others can see them; they are a form of public communication. This is relevant to this present study because matatu graffiti is a form of public communication (leave alone being a means of transport).

Yieke (2001, 2002, 2003, and 2006) has done extensive research using graffiti as an avenue of data collection. Her works are extremely insightful and fundamental to this study. However, she has used CDA and Socio-cultural approach in her studies. A lot will be borrowed from her study. The works will not only provide an entry point into this study but will also provide entry words of graffiti nature.

Kinyatti (2002) in her studies on gender and language. She explores on how male university students and matatu crew depict women as subjugated. She uses matatu graffiti to demonstrate on how women are demeaned. Her study will also act as an entry point too to this present study.

### **1.9.3 Literature Review Related to General Writings**

In this section, we will look at some of the literature review that relate to writings, especially writing that relates to graffiti.

According to Cooper and Greenbaum (1986), writing has all extraordinary flexibility. They go further to say that there is a sense in which writers can produce language of any kind... the variety of written forms produced is enormous (p.14).

They stress that communication is a dynamic phenomenon. The quality displayed by the development of information toward a particular communicative goal is controlled by a linguistic element to which this element contributes toward further development of communication (p.14). This informs this present study on graffiti on matatus and forms further basis into this study.

‘...context proves to be hierarchically superior not only to the text, but also to semantic structure (p.44). Information retrievable from the immediate context and the elements expressing such information is context dependent. This is of great significance to this study, as we will rely on context for meaning and intention.

Rogers (2005:1) demonstrates that ‘...writing allows us to communicate at a distance, either at a distant place or at a distant time. He posits further that the control of information is power created by writing.

Writing is the use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances p.2’...writing is the visible manifestation of a specific linguistic utterance, one that would be pronounced...p2. In view of these definitions, however, graffiti tend to be one of the writings and all these will form a strong foundation into the current study. That writing is done on a social context [where all and sundry can see] (Rogers 2005:7).

Bloomfield (1933:21) asserts that, ‘the most difficult step in the study of language is the first step’. We do not indeed claim to say whether writing is language, related to language, or ideas in general (Rogers 2005:2). This is insightful in this study.

Coulmas (1989:70) says that writing greatly enlarges the range of communication, and consequently power. He further proclaims messengers [matatus] that have no idea



what the message is all about and who needs not even understand the language in which it is phrased, that is, graffiti may carry that written message over thousand of miles. Writing serves that of expanding the communication range over any distance in space or time Street1984:20 cited in Coulmas (1989:12). Therefore, writing is a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the undue intervention of the [speaker] p.3. All these findings will add some resourceful insight into the present study of graffiti writings on matatus.

Crystal (1997:55) postulates that there are many linguistic activities where the identity of the visual variety is partly dependent on the active participation of the user (intention). This is with dialogue materials like questionnaires, official forms, diaries, post cards, circulars, letters and graffiti.

Either space is left for the user to fill in or opportunity given for them to reply in their own terms. This is a revelation to graffiti because most of these writings are dialogic or monologue in manner. The reduced syntax provides an unmistakable linguistic identity for study and the degree of simplification that can be introduced when dealing with such a complex area of human activity (p.55).

Crystal (1995) demonstrates that different lexical dimensions exist in a single lexeme. A single lexeme simultaneously contains information relating to several linguistic dimensions p.118. In addition, the lexicon is particularly sensitive index of the loaded lexicon, taboo, swearing, jargon, catch phrases and slogans. All these will form a basis of this study.

#### 1.9.4 Literature Related to Pragmatics

There are some useful M.A. dissertations and PhD thesis for our study. Atoh (2001) analyses the meaning of Dholuo nouns, considering a semantic field approach. His study is based on noun alone; this study will virtually concentrate more on all word classes relevant to the study. His work provides important insights to this study especially on Semantics.

Atichi (2004) looks at the divergences of meaning of words in Kenyan English. He discusses the processes of meaning of words and causative factors for them. The meanings are accounted for within the lexico-semantic dynamism and Stern's seven classes of meaning change. His work provides useful percolation to our study especially on narrowing and broadening which he calls expanding.

Mwebia (2006) analyses sense relations in Kimeru using lexical pragmatics theory. She endeavours to find out the differences and similarities in sense relations involving corresponding lexical items in English and Kimeru. This study looks at the interface between semantics and pragmatics and the role of context, intentionality and communicative value in graffiti. The study engages similar theory.

Munyiri (2006) explores the existence of semantic equivalence in the connotative value of symmetrical terms that refers to gender in Gĩkũyũ. She uses the socio-semiotic theory in her analysis.

In our current study, we will concentrate on general words and use the lexical pragmatics theory.

Njeru (2007) analyses language use in Gĩkũyũ. HIV/AIDS discourse. She makes use of the pragmatic exploration of the lexical euphemisms as substitutes of what is taboo in Gĩkũyũ. speech. She uses politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) and Neo-

Gricean theory of implicatures (1975). Her work provides useful insights into this study in the area of euphemisms, taboo, which are characteristic of graffiti.

Kamau (2008) discusses the truth conditions in pragmatics using RT. He demonstrates the need to consider context in assigning truth relation and transforms semantics into pragmatics. However, his study does not consider the interface between semantics and pragmatics that this study looks at. His study though provides insights to this study.

Kinyatti (2002) studies language and gender. Demonstrates how male university students and matatu crew demeans women. Moreover, how women are castigated and subjugated through graffiti writings on matatus. She uses a sociological theory; her study is significant in this study, although; this current study uses Lexical Pragmatics theory.

Michira (1993) displays a high level of code mixing in his work on the language of hawkers and TV advertising. He notes that the syntax of both languages (Kiswahili and English) is simple with the ungrammaticality overtly seen. This is a useful standing point into this study especially on data collection that depicts overt ungrammaticality and oversimplification of syntax a reminiscent of graffiti.

Habwe (1999) demonstrates that meaning goes beyond the usual linguistic properties in language in his PhD thesis on political speeches. He uses a pragmatic approach. This presents study is greatly influenced by his findings more especially on the theoretical framework, though his, is on oral disposition (speeches).

There are other important works which are relevant to this study, since they aptly provide the study with significant definitions, terms, concepts and appropriate insight, though much is not covered on a broad topic of graffiti. They include Yule (1996), Lyons (1977), Ullman (1962), Hurdford (1983) and Murphy (2003). These are all available works on semantics.

### **1.10 Research Methodology**

This section will primarily deal with the methods of data collection and analysis. The data collected will be based on graffiti writings from matatus operating Eastlands routes Nairobi. It will be on all general characteristics of graffiti. That is, straightforward praise or invective (abuse), for or against participant gangs, religious groups, poll participants, protesting groups. It will also consist of well-known quotation or slogan, biblical quotations, and commercial slogans. Puns and word play will be used too, i.e. execrable and ingenious expressions (playing with words of a once popular song).

#### **1.10.1 Area of Study**

The area of study is graffiti perspective on matatus. Graffiti to be extracted from the matatus plying routes to Eastland's region, Nairobi, that is, route numbers 6, 9, 14, 28, 17a, 19c, 18c, 32, 42, 23, 19, 60, 58. Seats of matatus, both in and outside will be used. Extensive library research will be conducted to find out the available literature on graffiti writings.

Internet will also be vital in this study especially on the area of theoretical framework, literature review and general study on writings.

### **1.10.2 Duration of Study**

This study on graffiti covers four months, which includes data collection, sampling and analysis.

### **1.10.3 Sampling**

In this study, we will use purposive sampling. Matatu route numbers 6, 9, 14, 28, 17a, 19c, 18c, 32, 42, 23, 19, 60, 58 will be used and Nairobi's Eastlands region. It is convenient being a hub and citadel of hip-hop culture in Kenya, (Calif).

### **1.10.4 Method of Data Collection**

The method of data collection will be observation with intervention as classified by Willems(1969), cited in Shaughnessy et al. (2006:107).The undisguised researcher will read and write down relevant graffiti text. Texts will be labelled accordingly. Qualitative method of data collection is used and so is quantitative.

### **1.10.5 Data Analysis**

The collected data will be analysed within the framework of lexical pragmatics theory, in order to ensure that research questions/objectives are achieved. The analysis of data will help in confirmation or discrediting of the study's research hypothesis. Thus, we will be confined to inferential studies. Figures, tables and diagrams will be used where necessary.

The data will be analyzed in the light of the concept of narrowing and broadening processes.

### **1.10.6 Interpretation of Results**

In this present study, we will base our interpretation of results on inferential data. This will be based on research problems, questions; objectives, hypothesis, research design, and data collection tool.

### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to both theoretical linguistics and graffiti writers. To theoretical Linguistics, this study seeks to unfold the strength of Lexical Pragmatics. The theory is a combinatory force in dealing with meaning in general.

The results of the study will provide an insightful perspective to the study of graffiti and other related writings, more especially in matatu industry.

The study will also shed more light on the validity and universality of the Lexical Pragmatics theory being the most current theory in modern Linguistics.

### **1.12 Summary**

This chapter has extensively provided some general introductory information relevant to this current study. It has provided both background information to both graffiti writings and topic under study. It has posited the research problem, objectives, hypotheses, and rationale of the study. The chapter also provides a theoretical framework of Lexical Pragmatics theory. Extensive literature is adequately handled in four phases; the literature review on theory, literature review based on graffiti, literature review on theoretical framework and subsequent review related to writings in general relevant to graffiti. Finally, the research methodology is overviewed and the significance of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION OF GRAFFITI ON MATATUS

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains linguistic properties of the language used in graffiti on matatus and provides a basic understanding of graffiti in the ensuing chapters. No much analytic and interpretive attempt is given on this chapter. However, exemplifications of data are given. The chapter further examines how graffiti writings on matatus differ from the standard varieties and conventional linguistic and communicative norms. It is divided into nine sections with some sub-sections, which entirely deal with diversified characteristics of graffiti writings. Concisely, a comparison is shown of graffiti with natural language, uniqueness of graffiti on matatus, lack of syntactic structures, strained style of writing, characteristic element of graffiti as a hip-hop culture, and general humour of graffiti writings with adequate examples taken from the data. Examples of data illustrated on this chapter are replicated in the ensuing chapters where they are lexically adjusted.

#### 2.2 Properties of Graffiti Writings

According to Crystal (1995: 181), some characteristics of graffiti have been given that shows a great deal of straightforward praise or invective for or against particular gangsters. The symbols and logos used often play a prominent role in the discourse, though; in this study, we confine ourselves to text only. Below are examples of graffiti that explain some of the properties of graffiti.

Consider the examples:

1. Hot shot
2. We lead others follow

'Hot shot' in some of the matatus could mean a form of praise while in others could be an abuse depending whether it is lexically broadened or narrowed. In most instances, it could be an invective or praise if it is lexically approximated, metaphorically or categorically extended in meaning.

'We lead others follow', from the assessment of this graffiti, we could say that 'lead' and 'follow' can be lexically narrowed to encode a more specific sense of 'leading on the road' while the rest 'follow'. This satisfies the explanation that 'this' matatu crewmembers are ahead in businesses.

Second, a common tactic is to respond to a well-known quotation or slogan as Crystal (1995: 181) puts it. These may involve Biblical or catch phrases. In this study, Biblical and slogans are predominantly used. Examples of data taken from different matatus are given below.

3. Babylon
4. Paradiso 'Paradise'
5. Simba wa Yuda 'Lion of Judah'
6. Beer is always wet

In examples (3, 4 and 5), all depict instances of Biblical denotation while example (6) is a catch phrase.

Third, graffiti dialogues and [monologues] also exist as writers react to each other. (p. 181). Consider the examples taken from two different matatus.

7. Delamere is back.
8. Try it loose job

Examples (7) and (8) are either dialogues or monologues seemingly seen to respond to 'invisible voices'



Fourth, puns and word play abound that is, words of a popular song or character are execrable, Crystal (1995:181). For example:

9. Delamere is back

10. Annan.

In examples (9) and (10) 'Delamere is back' and 'Annan' depict characters that were once known.

### **2.3 Graffiti Comparison to Natural Language**

The graffiti writings serve the communicative needs of the observers. Matatu crew use it to communicate their ideas, feelings and intentions. Like any natural language, a graffiti writing as a language have sound which can be represented linearly from left to right, up-down or down-up, either way and is readable. The graffiti text has developed into a system of symbols such as letters of the alphabet, numerals, and emoticons, which can be combined in different ways to communicate meaning. Matatu crew have come up with conventions of combining these symbols with fancy colours to convey information (message).

Like natural language, graffiti writings are a system with different levels of language; that is, phonological, syntactic, lexical, pragmatic, and semantic which can adequately be subjected to linguistic observation, description and analysis. Amazingly, it is a form of expression that is not only viewed as a social fact, art form, but also an economic attraction. This means that the society and individuals use it collectively. Individual users have to display some competence in order to communicate creatively, as seen in the scratched, scrambled form of texts on matatus in Kenya.

From the foregoing descriptions, we can say that the characteristics of graffiti are similar to any natural language. Some of these characteristics are: creativity, dynamism, arbitrariness, symbolism, linearity, culture dependency, communicative ideas, beliefs, feelings and intentions, sounds, conventionally governed by rules, has different linguistic levels i.e. phonological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic .

## **2.4 Uniqueness of Graffiti on Matatus**

Graffiti writings have a unique and peculiar style of writing. The style is adopted due to the kind of medium involved in the communication process. The fact that the space involved is immensely large makes writers to employ a unique style of writing coupled with the fancy paintings. This is referred to as text montage; where artistes have begun to, or resumed mixing image and text, Coulthard and Toolan (2005: 3). Writers simply write the words over an image where the words constitute a connected message and can be read as a text (ibid: 4), this study will deal with written text and leave out greater chunk of images and paintings. (Illustrations of text montage are at the appendix). Both the writer and the receiver of the message are not restricted linguistically by the nature of the matatus' graffiti surface area. The artistes are freely becoming creative to maximize this linguistic unrestrictive.

### **2.4.1 Lack of Proper Syntactic Structures**

#### **2.4.1.1 Use of Short Words**

Graffitists employ use of short words in the communication process try to convey a message. Some text graffiti are just made up of one word, which could indeed convey a 'loaded' message.

Consider these examples

11. Confused

12. ...looks younger.

In these examples, the writers of graffiti text do not use normal grammatical expressions. Sentences are predominantly characterized by simplicity or reduced syntactic complexity as in (11) and (12). The sentences or words are incomplete. Both content and functional words may not be overtly seen. The graffiti text is short, brief and void of grammatical and punctuation marks that the artiste does not ponder are necessary in putting the intended message across. To many of the graffiti texts on matatus, the subject and the object are overtly left out as demonstrated in 11 and 12.

#### **2.4.1.2 Use of Fragmented Sentences**

In the graffiti text style of writing, there is no clear concept of well formed syntactic structures. There are no clear-cut boundaries between words, phrases, and clauses so that a sentence is automatically thought of, as having a complete thought or idea. Most of the sentences are just fragments. There are no specific morpho-syntactic structures involved, but the order is linear as any natural language.

Example:

13. Soon to bedroom near you

14. Your friend next

From the examples (13) and (14), the sentences are fragments but convey a message that there is a 'somebody' inferred to in the graffiti text.

#### **2.4.1.3 Lexemes**

In this study, we will to a large extent deal with lexemes. According to Cruse, a lexical unit should be "at least one word", or elements under consideration are parts of

words, words or sequences of words. He further points that, a word is typically the smallest element that can be moved around without destroying the grammaticality of the sentence (ignoring any semantic effects) P. 35.

Thus, words are creatively manipulated to suit the audience. Words are created or constructed to a new lexical item (neologized). It is a strategy used in extending the lexical richness of a language.

Algeo and Pyles (1982: 260) state that processes of forming new words are made by creating, combining, shortening, blending or shifting the uses of old words...”

As earlier on said creation, shortening, combining, blending will be appropriate in this study.

Crystal (1995:170), has the temerity to demonstrate that a single lexeme simultaneously contain information relating to several linguistic dimensions. The current study will rely heavily on these linguistic dimensions of a single lexeme, as will be seen in the course of this study. Consider the examples below.

15. Shaft

16. Final cut

In (15) and (16), lexemes will determine expected meaning after being either lexically broadened or narrowed. Since the stereotypical shaft is a metal, the properties of this category can include any other metal when narrowed, In the matatu context, shaft when broadened will be interpreted as a vehicle in good condition.

#### 2.4.1.4 Constrained Spelling

Graffitiists evolve a unique way of words construction. They use several alternatives of spelling. Thus, there is no standard manner of spelling as one observes from one matatu to another. It is interesting to note that one word, takes several modes of spelling. Consider for example.

17. akdmks            'academics'

18. akademiks        'academics'

19. akademi            'academy'

Sometimes, it is difficult to interpret some symbols or words unless you decide the register, phonetic and phonological interpretation used, or know the artistes' style of writing.

From the examples (17), (18) and (19) different symbols and words are observed in words, which do not necessarily follow any set standard of spelling, though the message is same.

#### 2.4.1.5 Anonymity Element in Graffiti Text

Graffiti text message is meant for private reading. The graffiti is written with the intent of passing a message to either a single individual, authority or the public. In all this case, there is usually a high degree of anonymity in graffiti text writings. The authors do not want to identify themselves, especially when the text is highly inflammatory and by inflammatory we mean sensitive and against state laws. There is a tendency to hide behind the curtains, more specifically when authorities fear of undue reprisals. Interestingly, the 'author' and the 'audience' of graffiti text do not have any insight into each other's lives as some graffiti have information which are indeed inflammatory, invective or taboo like. However, matatus are a public means of

transport; the explicit graffiti on them needs a thorough scrutiny of the message and the intended 'audience'. Graffiti may use codes or symbols comprehensible to those involved in the communication process only. The participants may have a background of shared knowledge on which they continually draw in their intended interpretation of the graffiti texts. Either their dialogue is thus much less of cognitive explicitness or makes far more assumptions than would be found in writing meant for public reading in advertisement or entertainment display.

Consider these examples.

20. Try it loose job

21. Ameze wembe 'swallow a razor blade'

These examples depict a high degree of anonymity as they emanate from angles of obscurity, subjugation or fear of reprisal as (20) illustrates, while example (21) demonstrates, outright denial of continued poor working conditions and is more of a rebellion than sheer irony.

## 2.5 Strained Style of Graffiti Writing

The graffiti text style of writing is so unconstrained that it falls between standard and non-standard type of English. However, there is largely the code-mixing element and communication is highly achieved. The rules of Standard English grammar are flouted. Some of the words are greatly and intentionally misspelt. General rules for punctuation and capitalization are ignored, with many achieving the explicit fancy 'writing style. This style of writing is equated to calligraphy, or Gothic style of writing. Consider this example.

23. exortica 'exotic' (written invisibly unclear)

In (23), 'exortica' is written in a way that one strains in getting what the graffiti is about because of the style of writing.

### 2.5.1 Use of Phonetically and Phonologically Written Graffiti Text

The authors of graffiti text have immensely developed a written form of sounds that replaces spoken utterances. Words are written phonetically, for example, 'kam' for come, and 'sori' for sorry, 'akademka' for academic. The author may be thinking of the utterance in its spoken forms even though the message is transmitted in a written form. This adds also to the uniqueness of the style of graffitists.

Example

24. akademka      'academic'

Example (24) is a matter of phonetics and phonology. The written is pronounced as the spoken.

### 2.5.2 Ellipses

Graffiti texts exhibit some kind of telegraphic style of writing, which is in our view constrained. An elliptical style of writing is resembled to what people used to use in the writing of telegraphs. It is viewed in most instances as the intentional avoidance of functional and content words. These are prepositions, pronouns and demonstrative. Nouns, verbs or word classes are generally elliptical. Elliptical discourse is most often response to questions. Elliptical styles are not only economical in production but also respect the needs of receiver by being quantity significant. The 'audience' is expected to fill in the information to enrich the written discourse. The hearers are constrained by the immediate context and relevance. The information for enrichment may be

taken from the short and long-term memory, coupled with the background information or encyclopaedic entries.

Consider the examples taken from matatu route no.19/60

25. We call them, they run    ‘we call them they run’

26. Girls like it out way

27. Can sleep on their stomachs.

There is a left out element of the ‘initiator to the responses’. Example (25) ‘we call them, they run’ does not indicate specifically the caller, similarly to (26) and (27). This also depends on context interpretation.

### 2.5.3 Use of Abbreviations, Contractions and Acronyms

The graffiti text is predominantly rich in abbreviated words, contractions and even acronyms. The meaning is expressively retained. Seemingly, at this instance, there are no specific rules for writing graffiti text as yet. It is abundantly evident that there is a wide and rich repertoire of such graffiti words on matatus.

To some matatus, the graffiti text has letters in place of words, for instance “you” becomes “u”, “see” is ‘c’, single digit (figures) can replace words, as in ‘ate’ for 8, ‘for’ becomes ‘4’ and ‘to’ becomes 2. It is apparent that these forms of words are used for impressionistic purpose and intentioned departure of deviance, and of course for convenience purposes. For example:

28. Banjuka 2    ‘banjuka tu’

29. Dance 360    ‘dance all round’

In (28) and (29), ‘banjuka 2’ and ‘dance 360’ is explications of ‘figures’ in stead of words in use. ‘Banjuka 2’ is a hip-hop lyric.



## 2.6 Modality of Graffiti

According to Coulthard (2005: 25), Modality is the concept used by communication specialist to talk about different modes of codes of communication. These include speaking, writing, using images, gestures, sounds, colour, drawings etc. to communicate a specific message.

Graffiti artists have resorted to use writing, drawings, and images as opposed to speaking, sounds and gestures. We can also note that graffiti text message can be passed by various modes. [Thus] modes are resources for making meaning (p. 25). This study concentrates on graffiti as modes of 'message'. The same meaning, in any cultural domain, can be expressed in different modes and interpretation determined by the ways the message is received in different destinations.

All messages are multimodal since messages make use of multiple modes (p.26). Graffiti texts on graffiti are archetypal examples of multimodal messages. The authors use semiotic resources to communicate identities. The graffiti chosen and displayed all signify symbolically different aspects of those identities. The graffiti choice helps to create a particular identity (as we will see in later chapters). Graffiti artists send a message not to an implied audience but to anybody out there in the world, who happens to either board, hire, purchase or observe this graffiti on graffiti. The strategies to address an unspecified audience with both intention and communicative value are the focus of this current study.

Graffiti departs from the normal writings as graffiti are used as avenues of communication.

## 2.7 Graffiti as Hip-hop Culture

Hall (1997: 61) quoted in Coulthard (2005: 25) describes [graffiti] representation as the process by which members of a culture use signs to produce meaning that 'things, objects, people or events do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is [people] us, in society, who makes things mean, who signify'

Representation [graffiti] as a cultural process establishes individual and collective identities, and symbolic systems provide possible answers to the questions: who am I? What could I be? Who do I want to be? Woodward 1997:14 quoted in Coulthard (2005: 25).

Brummett (2006: 39) defines culture as the integrated set or system of artefacts, which is linked to a group, and what (people) grow in what supports and sustains them. We can further note that cultures are highly complex and overlapping, entailing consciousness, or ideologies and unarguably experienced through texts like graffiti. Brummett goes on to define popular culture, more specifically, [has] made up of those systems of artefacts to which most people are exposed to. Graffiti is an artefact, which are material signs of group identifications that are meaningful and that artefacts in particular are signs that are charged with extra meaning, and meaning of an artefact is significantly determined by its link to groups.

Therefore, culture entails consciousness or ideologies of an interrelated system of meanings that is generated by the system of [graffiti] that constitute a culture p. 31.

For now, however, keep in mind that, there is a consciousness or an ideology, implied for most people by the graffiti of a given culture that is intentioned with communicative value.

As we have seen, culture can also be experienced through texts. Brummett (2006: 34) describes text as a set of signs related to each other as far as their meanings all

contribute to the same set of effects or functions. We will explore this (text) in chapter 3.

Graffiti has evolved into a pop culture existence often related and associated to underground hip-hop music and break dancing creating a lifestyle that remains hidden from the public. Graffiti is used as a gang signal to mark territory, serve as an indicator, or tag for gang-related activity (Stowers retrieved from internet 2009).

A popular graffiti was of 1970 of the legend 'Dick Nixon before He Dicks you' Crystal (1995), reflecting the hostility of the youth culture to that U.S president.

Graffiti is used as a form of expression by political activities to mark territory. As clearly stated, graffiti is one of the four elements of hip-hop culture along with rapping, Djing and break dancing. It was the ultimate goal of exposure to video, commercialization and television series of Kung fu movies and hip-hop music. All these have eventually permeated the matatu industry.

Consider these examples:

30. Dj of hip-hop music

31. Kiss B

Examples (30) and (31) are graffiti that depicts forms of hip-hop culture. They are popular lyrics that have permeated the matatu industry. Message in these can be got depending on how lexically they are adjusted.

## **2.8 Humour in Graffiti Structure**

Any of the recognized domains of language structure and use can be manipulated in order to provide the input to a joke Crystal (1995:409). We cannot indeed discuss graffiti as just text without having to look into it from a humorous perspective.

Comic effects as is sometimes referred to can be linguistically categorized. These are discussed below.

### 2.8.1 Graphological Humour

This is deviation from the norms of spelling, punctuation, layout and typography. It greatly motivates a great deal of written humour as explicated in misprints, misspellings and many graffiti. It is inextricably workable and involved only in the written mode.

Consider these examples reflected in our data.

32. Too much sex makes you shortsighted

33. Bakers knead to do it.

34. Nobody gnu

In (32), (33) and (34) graphological humour is felt when the text is explicitly looked at and not merely read out aloud.

The examples are adapted from (Crystal 1995:409)

The above examples illustrates humour through the choice of the words that is, 'makes you shortsighted'; 'knead', 'gnu' are the phonological realizations of the humorous graffiti. 'Knead' and 'know' are 'correct' versions intended.

### 2.8.2 Morphological Humour

The manipulation of elements of word structure combine elements into novel forms, or divide words in unusual places. According to Crystal, (1995:81) graffiti sequences often play with word boundaries as shown in the data below. The example is borrowed and used in the Kenya context as a catch phrase in the matatus

35. Ass, gas or cash – no one rides free.

In (35), 'ass, gas or cash' would depict abuse, free ride or must pay when travelling on a matatu.

### 2.8.3 Syntactic Humour

Graffiti chains work in this way by adding or removing variable endings to a fixed opening, or a variable opening to a fixed ending Crystal (1995:181). Most graffiti jokes rely on syntax in the sense that they have a fixed form.

Consider these examples reflected on our data

36. Frakass      'fracas'

37. Wizzy        'wizard'

## 2.9 Styles of Graffiti Writing

Graffiti have different styles of writing with distinct names.

### 2.9.1 Tagging

Tagging is the most basic writing of a graffitist's name. Simply put, it is a hand style, whereby the writer's tag is his or her personalized signature. Tagging is often the example given when opponents of graffiti refer to any acts of hand-style graffiti writing. They contain subtle and cryptic messages, and might incorporate the artist's crew initials or other letters (Sunday Times 2/5/2010). Consider the example below.

-The texts are not in the original form as they appeared on the surface of the matatu.

37a. Brain

37b. Samo

### 2.9.1.1 Pissing

This is a form of tagging of taking a refillable fire extinguisher and replacing the contents inside with paint, allowing for tags as high as around 20 feet. Aiming to keep a hand style steady in this form of tagging is very difficult and most often it comes out wavy and sloppy. Observe the examples (not in original form).

37c. Nataka pesa                    ‘I need money’

37d. Pesa ya kazi jinga            ‘money for stupid work’

### 2.9.1.2 Throw-up

Another form of tagging is the “throw-up” sometimes referred to as “bombing”, which is normally painted very quickly with two or more three colours, sacrificing aesthetics for speed (ST. 2/5/2010). “Throw-up” can also be outlined on a surface with one colour.

This is an elaborate representation of the artist’s name, incorporating more stylized letters with a range of fancy colours. The stylized letters are a major concern in this study. This though, is more time consuming and increases the likelihood of the writer being caught thus negating the spirit of anonymity as advocated by most graffitiists.

Observe the examples below.

37e. Heckler

37f. Explorer

### 2.9.1.3 Blockbuster

This is also known as “rollering”. A large piece of art form always done in a block shaped style to cover a large area, solidly with two contrasting colours with the whole purpose of blocking the other writers from painting on the same wall. These are

usually accomplished with extension of paint rollers and gallons of cheap exterior paint (Sunday Times. 2/5/2010). For example

37g. Bombastic

37h. Always in front.

### **2.9.2 Wild-style**

Wild-style is a more complicated style of graffiti, whereby a form of graffiti usually involves interlocking of letters and connecting points. These pieces are often harder to read by non-graffitists as the letters merge into one another in an often unreadable manner (Sunday Times. 2/5/2010). For example

37i. Hot shot

37j. Gambler

### **2.10 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter has been to help us get accustomed to the general linguistics concepts of graffiti on matatus. In discussing the properties of graffiti, we have covered quite a lot on concepts and terms. We have explained generally on the available entry points to the study of graffiti, and how to reveal meanings, intentions, and communicative values on texts. Let us go over some of the more important ideas in this chapter in a quick summary.

We began by explaining general linguistics properties of graffiti and how we can be guided, directed and confined within the graffiti domain. In short, we looked at the characteristics of graffiti and natural language and the uniqueness of it on Matatus.

Second, we did an in depth exploration of the lack of proper syntactic structures within the broad sphere of graffiti. That is, explanation of use of fragmented sentences, short words, lexemes, constrained spelling, anonymity in graffiti, phonetically and phonologically elements in graffiti text, strained style of writing, ellipsis and abbreviated jargon.

Third, we ventured into modality of graffiti, styles of graffiti writing and graffiti as a hip-hop culture. Finally, one important consideration was humour in graffiti structure, which was discussed under the sub-sections of graphology, morphology and syntax. However, this seems like an overwhelming number of categories and concepts considered it probably opens up avenues for clear understanding of intentionality and communicative value in the broad topic of graffiti text that is discussed in ensuing chapters.



## CHAPTER THREE

### INTENTIONALITY AND COMMUNICATION OF GRAFFITI ON MATATUS

#### 3.1 Introduction

The second chapter dealt with linguistic description of graffiti. This chapter deals with intentionality and communication of graffiti text. It explains the language of graffiti, grammar of graffiti and graffiti meaning transformation. The chapter further explains the role of text and context in understanding graffiti and the unified approach of ad hoc concepts. The explicitness and implicitness of the visual effect of graffiti on matatus is also explained.

#### 3.2 The Language of Graffiti on Matatus

Language is tool of influence on people and their way of life. This is especially true in fields of transport, communication, advertisement and everyday interaction. The appropriate choice of language selection to convey (specific) message, which is intently selected, is virtually important. The use of Sheng', English and Kiswahili is appropriate to certain 'audience'. Sheng' is appropriate to the youths and those professing to be in the youth's culture. English and Kiswahili have extensively a repertoire of vocabulary. To these (languages), meaning of a word is a website. The meaning of these words may differ slightly and in a subtle way. Therefore, it is important to understand the connotation of a word, the feelings or ideas that are suggested by a word, rather than the actual meaning of a word. Take for instance, 'kama mbaya, mbaya', taken from a matatu route no.9 and 6, glossily translated as, 'if bad, it is bad'.

This suggests, 'badness', whereas to some no particular feelings or ideas is experienced. The 'intentioned target audience,' of course also assigns its own meaning of certain words in a subtle way. In a lexically adjusted process of metaphorical extension, it could mean 'amorous person'.

In view of what we have said, the language of graffiti is constrained by a range of contextual factors. Thus, ideally speaking, graffiti employs Sheng, English, Kiswahili and to a limited extent the vernacular.

Consider the examples below:

39. Street love

40. Vuta hewa pole pole ushisikwe na homa

'Breath slowly so as to avoid catching flu'

41. Mo faya 'More Fire'

From the above examples, different languages are evidently used in graffiti on matatus. In this case English, Kiswahili and Sheng are largely used. Graffiti exploits a multi-lingual set up in Kenya.

### 3.3 The Grammar of Graffiti on Matatus

Graffiti language is grammatically complex. From the graphology of text style of writing, and the invisibility of text, grammar is uniquely not simple. For instance:

42 sippin on syrup 'sipping on syrup'

43. Bout 2 to blast off 'about to blast off'

The two examples above have no overt subject or object either, which is typical to most graffiti text. The target audience is not mentioned. The reader only grapples with meaning through application of encyclopaedic knowledge, though the text looks very

attractive. If she/he manages to decode the message, then the intended information is easily sent through.

As opposed to advertising, graffiti are written in disjunctive rather than discursive grammar, close to the block style of headline writing than to conventional prose. Dependent clauses and phrases are used in their own ways without the support of a main clause (Muyuku 2009:42).

Sometimes the grammatical unit consists of a single word or two lexemes. An example from our data is:

44. Stingers

45a. Groundstyle. 'Ground style'

45b. Hot shot

The shorter units of disjunctive grammar make a more insightful effect on idle listeners than, discursive sentences and fewer demands on their concentration. The effect is clear on the beginning of a text, often with the bold or large type texts.

See examples below:

46 Don't get carried away wee come!

'Do not be carried away you come!'

In this example, it is difficult to grasp what message is sent through due to longevity of the sentence and the intended audience. It probably sends message to girls or boys not to either fear or be lured by enticers that they encounter, context plays a role in interpretation of message.

-Graffitiists sometimes break the rule of grammar with conventional spelling. The violation is intentioned to enhance an effect of, display of uniqueness or just to attract attention by seemingly looking different. Look at the examples below:

47. Riddms 'Rhythms'

48. Chamaa handsome 'handsome guy'

49 Banjuka 2 "Banjuka tu" (a hip-hop lyric)

In 'Riddms' the interdental fricative[ð] is intentionally substituted with the alveolar plosive[d] to have intensity of rhyme while example (48) is a repeat of the same word in two different languages, 'chamaa' is a Kiswahili referent for 'guy'. This is purely for emphasis and attention seeking as demonstrated by Russel (2001:189) ...that playing games with the normal distribution of upper and lower case letter is another attention-seeking device. In (48), 'chamaa handsome', when narrowed denotes to include all the good-looking people and broadened to include people who share with good people. Thus an interpretation, which satisfies a lexically adjusted process, is good people.

### 3.4 Role of Context

In this section, we shall explore the role context plays in enhancing meaning in a proposition in a word or a sentence expresses. The various functions of different contexts play in a text is also explained and its relevance in graffiti on matatus. The contexts referred here are the walls and seats of matatus,

Graffitiists have mental representations belonging to a certain equivalence of cadre. The thought expressed is the proposition that the speaker intends the hearer to interpret and the speaker believes based on the speaker's choice of words, Gauker (2003:10), put simply, a direct application of their shared understanding of meanings.

In this way, common knowledge of the propositions that sentences or words of their language express thus enable speakers to choose their words and enable audience to recognize the thoughts that speakers express (p.10).

The use of any graffiti depends upon the artiste's grasp of context. These include specific features of the social situation in which the communicative interaction takes place. The social, political and historical circumstances within which it is made meaningful, (Muyuku 2009:44). Graffitists must consider both the physical context (where the graffiti will appear, the spending power of the audience) and the mental context of the audience and how far they share the graffitist's knowledge of the wider cultural context.

From the available data collected, it is apparently observed that graffiti featuring diversified areas of influences are despicably evident. That is, matatus as 'contexts' are richly endowed with historical, social, religious, economic, archaeological and current states of graffiti messages.

Therefore, recognition that what we are looking at are graffiti that are an important aspect of context, since such knowledge shapes our perception of the material it contains in enhancing intentionality and effectiveness of the message communicated Russel (2001:186).

### **3.4.1 Matatu Context Relativity**

#### **3.4.1.1 Indexical Reference**

The proposition (idea, suggestion) expressed will depend on who is speaking and this will definitely vary from one context to another. Consider this example

50a. Kill a season under dawn

50b. Young and famous

50c. Beer is never late

The example above, its interpretation will vary accordingly from the context of use. It will be interpreted as rising up very early in the morning to make several trips to town before other matatus take centre stage. To others, it will be interpreted to mean 'to charge extra coins' more especially when it is jam packed. That is why we are saying it depends on 'who' are speaking and the indexical reference. If the addressee in this case is the matatu crew, that is, lexically broadened then this will be interpreted as taking advantage of the 'dawn' and 'making money'.

#### 3.4.1.2 Non-Demonstrative Reference

In this, the proposition expressed will depend on which object is the referent. Observe this example from our data.

51a. Public Donar 'public donor'

52b. Beats and beats

52c. Kiss B

In (51) it depends the reference referred to as 'donar'. The matatu where this graffiti is on only acts as an avenue of expression and the sense encoded is different from the proposition expressed. It could mean matatu-serving commuters in a particular route or passengers who commute in this matatu .Different interpretation are realised when subjected into lexically adjusted processes. If broadened the 'donor' is a matatu while 'beats and pisces' are metaphorically used to represent 'pieces'. Where (52c), may not be adequately interpreted unless context is fully understood.

### 3.4.1.3 Domain of Discourse

The proposition expressed will be the proposition that is present. Look at this example below.

52a. No power sharing one person

52b. Bear is never late

52c. Banjuka 2

In this example (52a), the proposition expressed is 'power' and the proposition present is 'power' or 'authority'. In Pragmatics Theory, there is generally a gap between the sentence meaning assigned by the grammar and the graffitist's meaning conveyed on a particular occasion of use. This is only validated not only at the level of whole sentences but also at the level of individual words. Put differently, there is a gap between the concept encoded by a word and the concept communicated (expressed) by use of that word on a particular occasion. Therefore, 'power' and 'one person' may present a different proposition depending on the lexical adjustment processes of narrowing, approximation, and metaphorical extension. In (52c) interpretation is difficult to encode the communicated concept unless context is understood.

### 3.4.1.4. Incompleteness of Graffiti on Matatu

This is when context relativity is incomplete and fragmented. Consider the example.

53a. Critical beatdown 'Critical beat down'

53b. Dance 360

53c. Wizzy 'wizard'

In this example (53a), the utterance is incomplete in that it does not tell us what is 'critical' and how 'beat down' it is. There is no overt NP or object. Likewise, (53b)-

context will greatly play a role in interpretation and background information of the reader.

#### **3.4.1.5 Lexical Ambiguity of Context in Graffiti**

This is in response to an elliptical question which could be either 'yes' or 'no' depending on the question which is implicitly asked with only an explicit answer, as seen in the example below.

54a. Stingers

54b. Dj of hip-hop music

In this example (54) it might be a response to "should one overlap" this could mean either 'yes' or you overlap, but be stung by either, other motorists or traffic police officers (instant arrest). In this context when lexically broadened, 'stingers' could either refer to traffic police officers or other motorists. The most likely reference is the traffic police officers cracking on non-compliant vehicles.

#### **3.4.1.6 Logical Ambiguity**

Not every word is graffiti and not all graffiti are words. Therefore, the way a word is interpreted may result to logical ambiguities. Take for instance 'shaft' and 'street love' taken from matatu route nos.19 and 58 respectively. 'Shaft' could mean literally the metal rod in vehicles or used denotatively as the male sex organ depending on context and encyclopaedic knowledge of the hearer. Similarly, 'street love' could literally mean 'love on street' expanded to include, always found on the street, common venture of matatus.



### 3.4.1.7 Grammatical Ambiguity

Some of the graffiti texts are grammatically ambiguous. A graffiti text on this matatu has this sign “hitchhikers may be escaping konvikts”

*55a. Hitchhikers escaping Konvikts, ‘convicts’*

Now, what are the hitchhikers fleeing from, convicts or jail? This is grammatically ambiguous. In this sense, a matatu is either a hitchhiker or a convict escaping from jail and ‘jail’ in this sense is traffic police officers when subjected to lexical broadening process of meaning extension.

[Thus]...words a speaker speaks may not tell us everything. We want to know about the background from which that act of speech arises (Gauker 2003:14). This will inform the intention and communicative interaction of any discourse.

Once a text is found, the next choice is to position the text within a context. According to Brummet (2006:110), texts do not just occur and they are not ‘read’ in a vacuum they are based on context; context can be made up of the room or library, reading assignment where text is read from original contexts, or defined by the intentions of those who make or who use texts. In this study, our context is the matatu that carries this text or the seat in the matatu where the text is found. The new context and text should ‘fit’ and the new placement of text should teach us more about what both text and context can mean.

### 3.5 Utility of Text on Matatu Graffiti

A text is a set of signs that work together to influence people. Texts create interrelated set of meanings. Graffiti texts seemingly have meanings. Texts may be based on

experiences and most important is how to make a choice on the identification and understanding of graffiti text.

The choice of the type of text one wants to study depends on two things, that is, discrete or diffuse. As we will see, a given set of graffiti signs could be seen, as either discrete or diffuse, depending on the artist's intentions. This choice may be represented on a continuum, as we will see below.

### **3.5.1 Types of Graffiti Text**

#### **3.5.1.1 Discrete Graffiti Text**

A discrete text is one with clear boundaries in time and space. A text's discreteness or diffusiveness depends on how it is experienced, understood or used. This depends on how the graffitist wants an audience to experience, understand or use a graffiti text. It is arguable that what could be seen as making up a discrete text from one perspective might also be seen as only part of a wider more diffuse text in someone else's experience.

We will discuss diffuse text in the following sub-section. A discrete text is clear where it begins and ends, but this may be seen as one component of a more diffuse text. This is a distinct feature of graffiti. Consider the example below.

56. Secret sessions

57a. Untouchable

57b. Frakass

According to Brummett (2006: 107) discrete texts are usually easier to identify because the signs that make up the text are close together in time and space; you do not have to "hunt" for them. For example, the signs that make up a discreteness of graffiti on matatus are all right on the matatu walls or seats. Because the signs are -

together in time and space, the audience is generally accustomed to identifying such text as a text. Take for example, the designers of all forms of decorations on city matatus with the entire graffiti make people perceive and understand it as a text in and of itself. Our main concern in the current study is to investigate particular details of these texts, that is, subsequent meaning that can be found in the graffiti text.

### 3.5.1.2 Diffuse Graffiti Text

Diffuse texts are harder to identify than discrete. In fact, very diffuse texts may be impossible to identify completely because they are so diffuse. Our main task is to indicate most of the signs that seem to be contributing meanings towards the same influences, without being able to identify every signs that could conceivably be part of the set, (Brummett 2006:107). In this connection therefore, our main exploration will be based on signs that are relevant rather than not every sign is a conceivable one. It is interesting to say about the meaning and influences of the signs that make up the experience of graffiti texts, but we also have something interesting to say about interpretation, that is, the intentionality and communicative value of graffiti texts on matatus. For example:

58. Women are like maize cobs, any can bite from

59a. Beer is always wet

59b. Negotiator

Graffiti texts are a set of signs that work together toward meanings. However, in essence, who determines what meanings are? Moreover, do we know what meanings are? In this study, we have choices in determining sources of meaning that a text has; these choices are explained in our subsection of sources of meanings that will guide

and assist in getting meaning through intentionality, context and communicative value interaction.

In example (58) and (59), meaning is got only when the bold words are interpreted through the Lexical Pragmatics processes of narrowing, approximation, metaphorical or category extension. It is suggested that the outcome of the ad hoc concept construction process could be either a narrowing or a broadening of the linguistically specified meaning: that is, the communicated concept may be either more specific or more general than the encoded concept. In this case, when broadened 'maize cob' and 'beer' are metaphorically used to mean woman.

### **3.5.1.3 Source of Meanings**

Meaning is usually complex and mainly layered and may even be self-contradictory (Brummett 2006:108). For these reasons then, it is rarely the case that meaning can be completely explained in a given text. Instead, as researchers, we must narrow our focus to some of the more interesting, influential, or controversial meanings. Moreover, this is what this study intends to investigate, graffiti on matatu.

Some meanings are widely held; we will call these broad meanings. Other meanings are held by only a few people, or rise only in particular circumstances; we will call these narrow meanings. Of course, it is important to remember that we are dealing with a continuum rather than a sharp distinction between broad and narrow meanings but a shared phenomenon which we shall exhaustively with when we subject our data to analysis in chapter four and adequately test the applicability and validity of the theory.

In our study we set out to look for specific texts on Matatus. It may be important to show what most people think a text means, because meaning underlies how texts influence people.

Meaning may be got through direct tactics, implied strategies or through structures that we discuss hereafter.

### **3.5.2 System of Meaning**

Most texts make certain explicit appeals, others are subtler and not always consciously intended to be perceived; these are implication of some of the direct tactics. Any text is put together or organized in certain ways and its various parts have relationships among themselves. This is what we call structure. Direct tactics, implied strategies, and structures are the sources or storehouses of meaning in a text. These levels are not radically distinct; rather they merge into each other, (Brummett 2006:118).

#### **3.5.2.1 Direct Tactics**

Direct tactics reveal the system of meanings, the consciousness offered by a text explicitly. It is any straightforward request or prompting one to think or behave in a certain way (Brummett 2006:118).

For example

60. No power sharing [;] one person

61a. Hague siendi 'I am not going Hague'

It is clear that a direct attempt to influence is made. Explicit claims, reasons given in support of the claims, visual images with a clear message in terms of what you are

being asked to do or not to do are all direct tactics that you might find in graffiti. These are probably the easiest appeals to find within a text. Many graffiti are full of direct tactics in that, they explicitly lay out for an 'audience' as being the best matatu to board.

Therefore, is a hip-hop song urging people to fight oppression or a rock and roll song telling people to stay off drugs as in example (41) and (28). In graffiti on matatus nowhere in the text is there any direct appeal to board the matatu nor are there any explicit reasons given to do so, apart from the soft slogans below the LCD screens with message 'SMS only'. Direct tactics are on the surface of the text. Therefore, a researcher should note what appeals are, identify them and assess the likelihood of the appeals to the mostly likely audience.

### 3.5.2.2. Implied Strategies

These are oddities and peculiarities in graffiti. Things missing or too prominent that conveys meanings in and of themselves. Elements of a text will suggest, or lead to some other element. There are signs that convey a message in a text. We have keystone signs and transformations if a keystone sign were removed from a text the whole thing would lose its meaning. Therefore, a word in a text carries the most powerful meanings. For example:

61b. Monica Lewinsky

62a. Simba wa Yuda 'Lion of Judah'

62b. Paradiso

In (61) and (62) meaning of the graffiti texts may be implied depending on the application of the Lexical Pragmatics adjustment processes involved. The sense encoded is not the sense communicated take for instance; 'Monica Lewinsky' when

narrowed could imply the girlfriend to former US president. Furthermore, when broadened will imply to any 'loose' woman metaphorically or a prostitute in meaning extension. In (62), 'simba wa Yuda' in a lexically narrowed sense could imply 'Jesus' and when lexically broadened could mean 'lion' of Judah metaphorically, or a 'matatu' that dominates the road in category extension. In all these examples context and relevance play a role in achieving optimum expectation.

### **3.6 Visual Effect in Graffiti**

Image and text is an effective means of communication between appearance and reality Muyuku (2009:45). It is used as an attention seeking mechanism in graffiti. Russel (2001:188) asserts that visual images may be the first thing that catch the eye in advertisement, so is graffiti, but for it to have the fullest effect; they need the help of words. Visual content and design in graffiti have a very great influence on the audience, however, it is a language that helps people to identify meaning and its communicative value.

It is sometimes difficult to tell what a graffiti text is saying until the visual image i.e. caption or slogan appears next to the text. When an image is visibly located and words written above, below or besides it, then meaning in this particular context becomes clear and avoids unnecessary interpretation in many ways. So relationship between text and image in cases like this is known as anchorage (Muyuku 2009:45). The word anchors the image to the context.

The words are needed to anchor an image in time. Most words indicate time by use of tenses, but in graffiti on matatus, it is widely experienced that there is no clear-cut boundary on the use of tenses as exemplified from the data below.

63. Eat or get eaten 'eat or eaten'

64. Don't get carried away come!

Images by nature and all alone do not indicate time, unless accompanied with words.

### **3.7 Explicitness and Implicitness Content in Graffiti**

#### **3.7.1 Explicit Content in Graffiti**

There is no language whether natural or artificial, which has no ambiguity. Context dependence is evidenced with the hope of avoiding misunderstandings. According to Grice, the founder of modern Pragmatics (Grice 1967, 1989), pointed out that as soon as humans start to use such language, it will change, acquire ambiguities, connotations and implications and largely precision is lost. Thus, in these way natural languages like English is used in a way that is explicit and literal as possible, in hope of reducing ambiguity, vagueness and content dependence to a minimum. There has been disinterest and misunderstanding between the communicator and audience. This leads one to search for speaker's or author's intentions as this study intends to investigate. The search for recognizing intentions of others is one of the basic abilities of humans, which distinguishes them from other animals as posited by developmental psychologists.

We will look at Pragmatics from a point of view of relevance, which will act as a basis of understanding on how hearers or readers understand what is explicitly/implicitly conveyed by an utterance (in this case written text). Pragmatists study utterances that are datable events with a speaker; tone of utterance, place of utterance, addressee and so is with graffiti texts.



In this view then, sentence or word meaning assigned by the grammar vastly undermines the meaning a speaker may intend to convey by uttering that sentence or word on a given occasion, take for instance graffiti on matatus.

Therefore, explicit content is what is stated, asserted or said. Consider the example taken from some of the matatus.

65a. Makosa ya marehemu hakutumia chuara 'The problem with the deceased demise was that didn't use a condom'

65b. You can have a beer in public.

From the above examples, the context independent sentence or word meaning assigned by the grammar is compatible with a wide range of possible interpretations. For example, in (65a) the word "chuara" is ambiguous, i.e. has two or more linguistically encoded meaning, assigned by the grammar and the audience has to choose between them. The main purpose is not to recover some arbitrary meaning, but to identify the speaker's meaning, the meaning that was intended to be conveyed on that particular occasion. That is, the use of the 'condom' will have saved the deceased from contracting AIDS and subsequently dying. This is the only meaning that the speaker is likely to have for any audience and the only one the hearer has the right to accept as true. It is not the literal meaning of 'the polythene paper' for wrapping or carrying consumables. Graffiti texts on matatu are largely rich with explicit content and a repertoire of possible interpretations. Similar interpretations are also adduced in (65b) through lexical pragmatic adjustment processes of broadening and narrowing.

### 3.7.2 Implicit Content in Graffiti on Matatus

According to Carston (2002), implicit content is what is hinted, implied or implicated.

Observe the examples reflected on our data.

66. Gambler

67. Make your life better

In example, (66) and (67) something is tacitly conveyed which is not part of the encoded meaning of the word or sentence uttered. It is the responsibility of the hearer to identify these interpretations through the application of Lexical Pragmatics adjustment processes. Of course, gambler is not supernatural being. However by narrowing the denotation of 'gambler' to include only conmen and broadening it to include people who share business transactions, then it can be asserted as being sly, money makers', and treacherous.

All in the entire speaker's meaning or intended interpretation will include both explicit content and implicit content; that is, everything the speaker, in this case, the graffitist intends to convey.

### 3.8 Graffitists' Meaning and Communication

Audiences attend to written texts for many reasons apart from simply wanting to understand the speaker's meaning. Moreover, graffitists may have several intentions in producing a text apart from just having their meaning understood. An artiste may intentionally manipulate his/her audience (without realizing) into drawing conclusions that s/he would not acknowledge as part of his/her meaning. When someone speaks or writes, information can be conveyed in three ways, that is, accidental, covert and overt information transmission.

### **3.8.1 Accidental Information Transmission**

‘When I speak whether I like it or not’, my accent may be transmitted to writing from the way one speaks and definitely this will tell you something about my social or regional origins. In this way, one may accidentally convey information not intended to be conveyed. Such accidentally transmitted information may be noticed by an audience and used to draw a variety of conclusions which are not intentionally conveyed and do not form part of the speaker’s meaning (which is by definition intended). Thus, graffitiists may accidentally convey by revelations through their styles of writing. The audience then draws conclusions on their own responsibility for their own purposes. The intentioned meanings are not part of what the speaker wanted to share with the audience when h/she wrote graffiti text.

Look at these examples below

68. Final cut

69. Groundstyle ‘Ground Style’

Information intentionally transmitted by an artist can be distinguished into two subtypes.

#### **3.8.1.1 Covert Information Transmission**

Sperber (1995) notes that intentional information transmission may involve a degree of manipulation or concealment of a text in message transmission. This is typical of most graffitiists. Most intentions of graffitiists can only succeed if they remain hidden. Obviously, if you realize that, ‘I want you to think I am nicer than I am’ you are not going to be deceived, Sperber (2003). This is a case of covert information transmission. It involves a speaker’s intention, but one which is not intended to be recognized or shared with an audience. It is clear that the speaker does want the

audience to recognize his /her intention. This is indeed what this current study is investigating. Consider example below

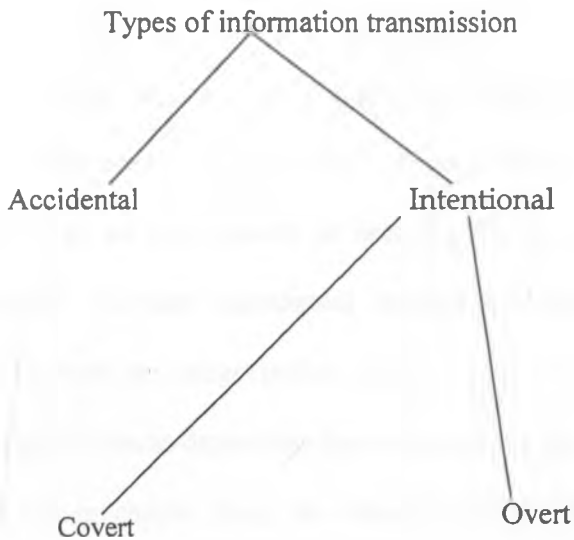
70a. Oprahization

70b.4 x 4 Usain Bolt

In (70a), 'oprahization' is a lexically adjusted word formed through coinage from 'Oprah' the famous TV show. In this sense, 'oprahization' is used to the audience that understands the background information and context of usage. The message passed is covert and is not meant to be shared by any other 'audience', which does not know the origin of the coinage. On (70b)'4 x 4 Usain Bolt' has also been coined to be interpreted as the fastest means of sending products, in this context, money adopted in advertisements by banking sectors.

### **3.8.1.2 Overt Information Transmission**

According to Sperber and Wilson (1995) demonstrate that an attempt of sharing takes place. The speaker not only intends to convey a certain message, but also intends his/her hearer to recognize this intention. For example in (58) above 'Makosa ya marehemu hakutumia chuara' grossly translated as 'the problem of the deceased fault did not use a condom'. A speaker who utters or writes not only intends the phrase 'chuara' to be understood in one sense rather than another, but also intends the audience to recognize this intention. In overt communication, there are two layers of intention for the audience to pick out, a basic speaker's intention to inform the audience of something, and a higher order intention that the audience should recognize that this was basic intention. The figure below relates how information is transmitted as illustrated in the example, 'makosa ya marehemu hakutumia chuara'. The message transmitted is either accidental, intentional, covert or overt.



**Figure 4 Types of information transmission** (adapted from (Sperber 2002:7)

### 3.8.1.3 Shifts of Meaning

In this section, words are converted from one grammatical function to another without change of form through a process known as functional shift. The changes impeccably involves from one word class to another (Algeo and Pyles 1982).

The examples under this category are names of people, famous and infamous events all over the world that have acquired new meanings. Shift of words to new users is demonstratively a way of identification. This is common in graffiti on matatus.

Examples from our data collected are:

71. Annan

72. Monica Lewinsky

-In (71) and (72) shift in meaning occurs when names of people like 'Annan' and 'Monica Lewinsky' denotatively acquires new meaning of 'negotiator' and 'prostitute' respectively when lexically broadened.

### 3.9 Ad hoc Concept

An ad hoc concept is one that is made up on the spot. This is according to psychologist Barsalou (1983). Lexical interpretation typically involves the construction of an ad hoc concept or occasion-specific sense based on interaction among encoded concepts, contextual information and Pragmatic expectations. Barsalou on his work on categorization showed that prototypical narrowing was much more flexible and context-dependent than was standard assumed.

As we will see in chapter four, the outcome of the ad hoc concept construction process could be either a narrowing or broadening of the linguistically specified meaning; that is, the communicated concept may be either more specific or more general than the concept encoded.

Narrowing and broadening involve the same interpretive mechanism and may combine in the interpretation of a single word ,but there is a continuum of cases of broadening ranging from a strictly literal use through approximation, hyperbole, metaphor which require different interpretive processes which involve the same processes as those used for ordinary or literal utterances. This is discussed fully in chapter four. We cannot study graffiti on Matatus without clearly understanding the basic tenet in Lexical Pragmatics of 'ad hoc concept'. Consider the examples below

73. 4 x 4 Usain Bolt

• 74. Google

In examples (73) and (74), the ad hoc concepts are made on the spot. There is no ready-made mental representation by the audience (subject). In (74) 'google' when subjected to lexical Pragmatics processes of narrowing and broadening can have

different meanings. 'Google' if narrowed could mean a cyber café or internet. Broadening of 'google' solicits widened meanings, as the occurrence of 'google' is interpreted in slightly different ways. In the matatu context, 'google' could indicate subsets of internet connections like Youtube and Facebook. Thus, the matatu in this context can be a form of 'google'. The matatu is the context.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter was set to describe the data collected for our study. It informs more on what was discussed in chapter two. It describes the language and grammar of graffiti texts, the role of context and text in understanding meaning and communication in graffiti and its visual effects. More importantly is the explicit/implicit content in graffiti text. In conclusion, graffiti's meaning and communication is explained too. Nonetheless, the significant role of ad hoc concept is exploited giving rise to interpretive mechanisms in getting meaning.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF LEXICAL PRAGMATICS

#### THEORY

##### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter incorporates the data described in the previous chapters into the specific processes of lexical pragmatics theory. The processes are broadly classified into two categories namely narrowing and broadening. Broadening is further divided into approximation, metaphorical extension, and categorical extension and neologism. This chapter is set to establish whether lexical pragmatics theory can adequately analyse the data.

Lexical pragmatics is a recent field in Linguistics where the meanings of words are frequently pragmatically adjusted and fine-tuned in context, so that their contribution to the proposition expressed is different from their lexically encoded sense, Wilson and Carston (2007:1). Well-researched examples include lexical narrowing, for example, 'drink' used to mean alcoholic drink and 'flat' used to mean relatively flat and metaphorical extension of, 'bulldozer' used to mean forceful person. Narrowing, approximation and metaphorical extension are phenomena that are often studied in isolation from each other and given distinctive kinds of explanation.

##### 4.2 Lexical Narrowing

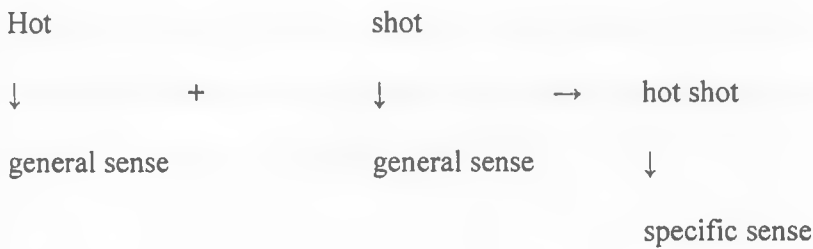
Lexical narrowing involves the use of a word to convey a more specific sense than the encoded one, with a more restricted denotation, that is, picking out a subset of the items that fall under the encoded concept. Lexical narrowing may take place to different degrees, and in different directions. Put differently, lexical narrowing is the



case where a word is used in a more specific sense than the encoded one. The effect of narrowing is to bring to fore a particular sub-part of the linguistically specified denotation. Examples of lexical narrowing that are observed in the data are:

75a. hot shot

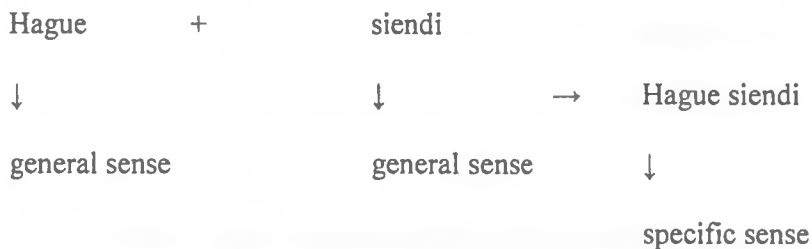
This lexical item is formed by combining two general terms ‘hot’ and ‘shot’ as demonstrated below.



It is shown that through the linguistic process of compounding, the general concepts of ‘hot’ and ‘shot’ narrow to a new concept ‘hot shot’ which is specific. This text is found on a matatu that operates many trips in a day, thus making a lot of money in a day. The specific sense narrows to a more specific sense to those matatus which overlap, uses routes that they are not designated for, and do not stop ‘anyhow’ a part from the stage or when picking up passengers. In this, context plays a major role in guiding towards cognitive effects. The hearer uses his encyclopaedic knowledge, the concepts in relation to context and makes conclusions. Consider this example:

75b. Hague siendi ‘Not going Hague’

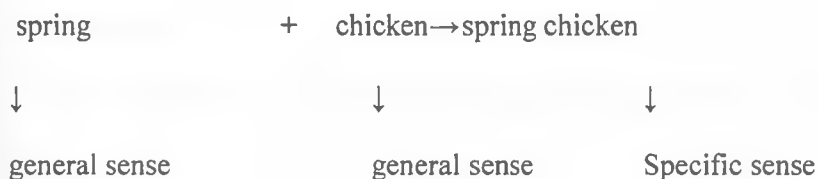
‘Hague siendi’ in the same way falls under lexical narrowing. Its development emanates from general to specific as shown below.



‘Hague siendi’ forms a specific sense, in that; it refers to a specific place (court) where International Criminal of Justice is located, found in Hague, Netherlands. This therefore narrows into a more specific sense of the headquarters of International Criminal Court of Justice. As with the other example (68a) illustrated above context, cognitive effects and encyclopaedic knowledge interprets the concepts in relation to context and makes conclusions.

### 75c. Spring chicken

Spring chicken is formed by combining two general terms ‘spring’ and ‘chicken’ as shown below:



The general concepts of ‘spring’ and ‘chicken’ narrow to a new concept spring chicken, which is specific. A term used to denote a ‘young girl’. In matatus young girls can be referred to as ‘spring chickens’. This is specifically narrowed further to a more specific sense of a ‘loose girl’. Like all other examples context plays a major

role in guiding towards cognitive effects and application of the encyclopaedic knowledge in interpreting the meaning.

#### 76. ... looks younger

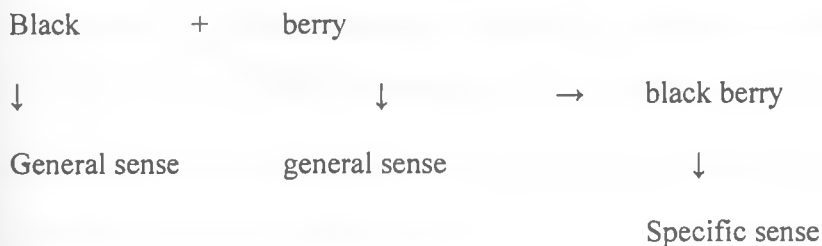
In (76), 'looks younger' might convey not the encoded sense 'looking young in age' but more specifically, 'young in tenderness' or significantly 'average in age'. Thus, the effect of this is to highlight a particular subset of the linguistically specified denotation of 'younger'. This is narrowed to specifically denote those 'young girls' passengers.

#### 77. Beer is always wet

In (77), 'wet' when disambiguated means 'not dry', would probably then be narrowed further to mean 'wet' when ordinarily speaking 'when soaked in water', or 'absorbent'. Nevertheless, seemingly, it is more of a metaphorical extension than a narrowed concept, especially when 'beer' is in this context. Beer could denote 'woman'.

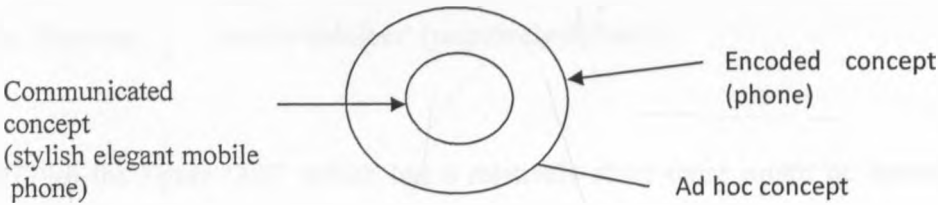
#### 78. Blackberry

In (78), 'blackberry' its development begins from general to specific as illustrated below



The compound noun 'blackberry' forms a specific sense. It refers to a model of mobile phone. The specific sense narrows further to specific sense of a modern elegant, stylish type of mobile phone model, a blackberry.

These examples, quite clearly show how narrowing is triggered by the search for relevance. In view of these, narrowing increases implications, and the hearer is entitled to narrow the interpretation of 'blackberry', 'wet' 'younger', thus raising expectations that are satisfied. This is achieved through encyclopaedic assumptions and mutually adjusting context, content and expectations of relevance are satisfied or abandoned altogether. Observe the figure below:



**Figure 5 Lexical Narrowing (adapted from Sperber)**

### 4.3 Lexical Broadening

In lexical broadening the use of a word to convey a more general, sense than the encoded one, with of course a consequent expansion of the linguistically specified denotation. In this, approximation, metaphorical extension, category extension and neologism are subvarieties of broadening which differ mainly in the degree to which the linguistically specified denotation is expanded. Let us consider how these varieties of broadening are shown in our data.

### 4.3.1 Approximation

Approximation is the case where a word with a relatively strict sense is marginally extended to include a penumbra of items what Lasersohn (1999) calls a 'pragmatic halo' that strictly speaking fall outside its linguistically specified denotation. Approximation is a minimal type of broadening. It is also known as loosening in that round numbers, geometric terms, and negatively defined terms are good examples.

Consider these examples:

79a. Dance 360 'about 360 degrees cyclic' (round numbers)

79b. Northbound 'roughly north' (geographical terms)

79c. Painless 'nearly painless' (negatively defined)

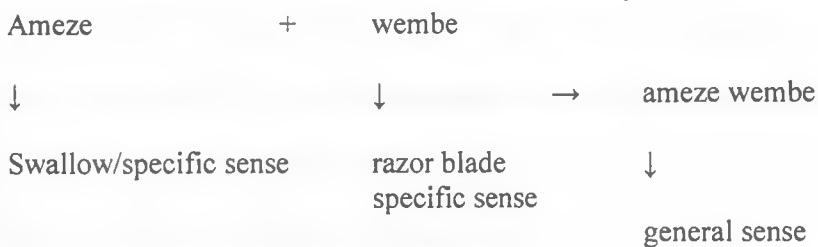
In (79a) the figure '360' which has a relatively strict sense might be intended and understood as an approximation, so that the speaker would be interpreted as claiming that the dancer in question is 360, that is, close enough to being 360 degrees, round so to say.

Here the concept begins from specific sense to general sense. For example the figure 360 is specific but broadens to loose figures which can be  $300^{\circ}$ ,  $250^{\circ}$ ,  $180^{\circ}$  or even  $90^{\circ}$ . That is, it is not exactly 360 degrees. This concept of loose figures automatically tells us that this matatu or any can swerve at any of the degrees especially in avoiding ramming into another matatu, overlapping or even avoiding police crackdown. The context in which this utterance is found in relation to the concept of the figure will play a role in understanding the message in the sense that passengers or audience will be swayed in any direction.

In (79b) ‘North bound’ may be used literally to mean that this matatu faces due north, or as an approximation north-bound\*, meaning that the matatu faces or operates in a generally northerly direction. Similarly, in (79c), the term ‘painless’ may be intended and understood either literally painless or as an approximation painless\*, in which case the speaker would be interpreted as claiming that the matatu will bring the passenger or audience close enough to pain free commuting, that is, devoid of congestion, overcharging, police crackdown, overlapping and generally a serene environment in the vehicle.

#### 80. Amaze wembe “swallow a razor blade”

In (80), ‘ameze wembe’ ‘swallow razor blade’ would be an acceptable approximation when applied to objects that almost satisfies the strict definition, but not quite. ‘ameze’ ‘swallow’ and ‘wembe’ ‘razor blade’ are specific senses that are broadened to general sense of ‘swallowed razor blade’, though not really swallowing the ‘razor blade’. See the illustration below.



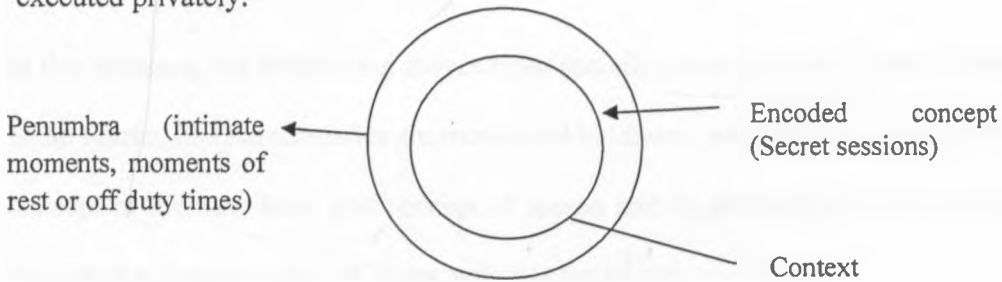
Thus, in this sense it is now indeed swallowing the real razor blade but approximately linked to undergoing a difficult encounter or trial, so to speak.

#### 81. Secret sessions

In (81) ‘secret’ and ‘sessions’ are two different specific senses that are broadened through a lexical process of approximation.

Secret + sessions → secrete sessions  
 Specific sense      specific sense      general sense

It almost satisfies the strict definition, but not quite ‘secret sessions’ can approximately be equated to ‘intimate moments’, ‘moments of rest’, ‘off-duty’, ‘times of giving bribes to traffic police officers,’ because in matatu industry these are executed privately.



**Figure 6 Approximation      Adapted from Sperber**

#### 4.3.2 Metaphorical Extension

Metaphor may be seen as a more radical type of broadening. In that the communicated concept departs much further from the encoded concept compared to other subvarieties of broadening mentioned earlier on. Consider these examples of metaphors that feature in our data.

82a. Vuta hewa pole pole usishikwe na homa

‘Breathing without haste makes one not to catch flu’

82b. Kill a season under dawn

-82c. Eat or get eaten

In (82a), the speaker may be understood as conveying that one actually gets a cold or flu (a literal interpretation), or close enough to catching a flu, and that ‘vuta hewa pole pole’ will make one not to catch a flu. In this case, ‘vuta hewa pole pole’ will not.

induce any mental state of discomfort it is merely a metaphorical representation. Similarly, to (82a) and (82c), in (82b) 'season' is viewed to have shared properties with 'dawn'. In this case, matatus, which whose crew rises up very early in the morning, are at a good chance of reaping good returns due to the fact that many commuters rise up early to catch those matatus to work. Similarly, early in the morning traffic jam has not yet piled up. Likewise, to (82c), similar points apply.

In this instance, the broadening moves from specific sense to general sense. 'Season' is the source. Its characteristics are transferred to 'dawn', which in this case is the new concept or the new idea. The concept of season and its characteristics is understood through the characteristics of dawn, which is the known concept.

#### 83. Your friend next

In (83), 'your friend next' is a more of a metaphor than an approximation in that 'your friend' falls very far outside the normal denotation of 'next'. Thus, in this example context will play a significant role in getting appropriate meaning and prior background knowledge of the utterances, otherwise without context the meaning is obscured. Therefore 'your', 'friend,' and 'next' should be clear in the reader's mind, that the message being passed is that 'anything' can happen to anyone as it also happened to any other person there before. However, we would be reminded strictly that context, content and expectation of relevance play a pivotal role in enhancing interpretation of meaning.

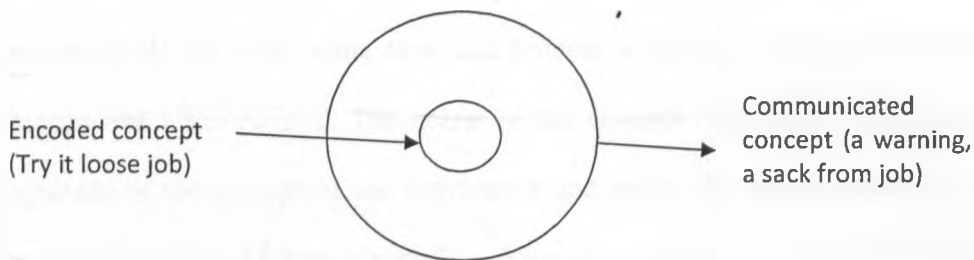
#### 84. Try it loose job



In this example, there is a more radical widening very far outside the normal denotation of 'loose job.' First, in my view, it appears as a cautionary expression. Second, it refers to 'somebody' who is entirely oppressed or working under harsh conditions. The working conditions being in matatu business, this definitely illustrates the case of matatu crew. Possible metaphorical interpretations ensue.

In the matatu industry, it is widely shown that bribes exchange hands; touts like hanging on fast moving vehicles, passengers alight even when a vehicle has not stopped especially not within the terminus and or cruelty exhibited or among themselves.

Form the explanations, we can say that 'Try it loose job' deviates from the normal denotation of losing job especially in salaried environments. Thus, there are different degrees of distance from the encoded 'literal' concept. The figure below illustrates these.



**Figure 7 metaphorical extension** adapted from (Sperber)

#### 4.3.3 Category Extension

This is a further variety of broadening which is typified by the use of salient brand names to denote a broader category, including items from less salient brands. Personal names like Chomsky, Shakespeare and common nouns both lend themselves to

category extension (cf. Glucksberg 2001: 38) quoted in Wilson(2003:2). This refers to a specific person. Chomsky is an intelligent person and therefore has the characteristics of intelligence. Under category extension, all the geniuses, which are the new category, can be regarded as belonging to a broader category of which Chomsky is the salient member. Graffiti on matatus has expansive reflections on category extensions.

Let us consider these data below:

85a. Delamere is back

85b. Annan

In (85a), 'Delamere is back', this is the name of the grandson of Lord Delamere, Tom Chomololdely, who for the past six or eight years featured in the press for his oppressive characteristics. First, he intentionally killed a game warden by the name Olesesina and two years later fatally wounded a mason by the name, Njoya. He was deliberately left scot free, but after widespread public cry over his misdeeds, he was arrested and arraigned in court, and later, on discharged. The name 'Delamere' was conceptualized for quite some time and become a salient member of the broader category 'the killer person'. The hearer of this concept 'Delamere' considering the magnitude of the concept of use interprets it and makes the right conclusion, which absolutely satisfies his/her expectation. Personal name has lent itself to category extension. Graffitiists like these (category extension) because of their creativity and expansiveness.

In example (85b), 'Annan' is another example of category extension. 'Annan' is a name of the former UN Secretary General. In this context, it refers to a trade name of a matatu. The initial 'Annan' broadens the sense and develops into a general concept of a matatu name. Therefore the 'Annan' referred to a matatus' trademark has -

extended to include any other type of vehicle. Interestingly, you will notice vehicles apart from matatus emblazoned 'negotiator', 'mediator', 'peacemaker' to mean peace. Thus all these (negotiator, mediator, peacemaker) are extensions with implied meaning which is usually understood through the hearer's encyclopaedic knowledge of these concepts.

#### 86. Beast of burden

In example (86), 'beast of burden', which start out as names for particular type of animal, that is, 'donkey' may end up being used to apply to the whole broader categorically extended to include all animals, or matatus that work all day without having any result. Thus, in (86) when subjected to lexically pragmatics, it might be understood as referring not specifically to a donkey but to anything that does work without resting, referring to any animal or vehicle in this context. It is a category because the name of a salient category member is extended, to apply to the completely broader category to which it belongs.

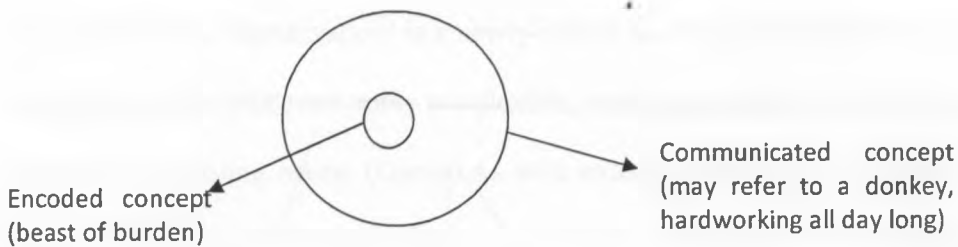


Figure 8 category extension Wilson (2006/7:6)

#### 4.3.4 Neologism

Neologism and word coinages provide further data for a theory of lexical pragmatics and shed some light on the nature of the mental mechanisms involved (Wilson

2003:3). Graffiti on matatus largely employ neologism that have an effect on communication and intentionality.

This is a flexible, context-dependent way of creating novel verb senses from existing nouns. The borderline between familiar and unfamiliar words is unlikely to be drawn in the same place for all speakers of a language or for the same speaker at different times: while some hearers may be able to retrieve a ready-made word sense, others may have to construct it on-line. Consider these exemplifications from our data:

87. Mo faya 'more fire'

88. Oprahization 'from Oprah Winfrey'

The above example is of coinage reflected in our data. 'Mo faya' in this context means 'more fire'. Phonologically, 'mo fire' comes from an English word 'more fire' meaning a lot of fire. 'More and fire' is both phonologically and phonetically changed into 'mo' and 'faya' respectively so as we end up with a coined phrase as 'mo faya' which definitely maintains same sense but acquires a different morphological configuration.

In example (87), 'Oprahization' is a newly-coined word (adjective). This suggests that lexical-pragmatic processes apply in a flexible, context-dependent way, creating novel senses from existing nouns (Oprah). As with extended meaning, neologisms which emanate out as one-off creative uses may become established in a community and eventually be seen as part of the language with time and usage.

Pragmatic inference continually makes up for gaps in the vocabulary, and this should be taken into account in the theory of Lexical Pragmatics. From the exemplifications analysed, Lexical Pragmatics process of narrowing, approximation, metaphorical extension and neologism fully apply spontaneously, unconsciously and automatically.

in fine-tuning the interpretation of virtually every word. Having said that then, had it been that there were no pragmatic processes, and words always communicated the concepts they encode, audience would have little difficulty understanding what the speaker is trying to convey. It is demonstrated that the more the communicated concept can depart from the encoded concept, the harder it should be for speakers and hearers to coordinate their understandings. Therefore, the pivotal role of Lexical Pragmatics is to explain how this coordination is realised by showing what triggers Lexical Pragmatic processes, what direction they take, and when they stop.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter was concerned with establishing whether the processes of Lexical Pragmatics theory can adequately analyze data for our study. These are narrowing and broadening, with broadening subdivided into subvarieties of approximation, metaphorical extension, category extension and neologism. As discussed in previous chapters, it is evidently seen that words are strictly defined and loosely used, while others have broader, vaguer meanings, which are typically narrowed in use. In our view and from the results of the data analyses, it is arguably concluded that Lexical Pragmatics theory can adequately handle graffiti data on matatus.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study aimed at analyzing the linguistic perspective of graffiti on Matatus with an attempt to establish whether it achieves the intentionality and communicative effectiveness of graffiti text messages. The role of context, interpretation, appropriateness and adequacy of Lexical Pragmatics theory in testing data is investigated.

#### 5.2 Summary

The broad aim of this study was to investigate if there are linguistic elements in graffiti on Matatus and to ensure that efficient and effective understanding of the message is achieved through intentionality and communicative effectiveness. The objectives of the study were; to establish the linguistic intentionality and communicative value of graffiti on Matatus and to establish the role of context in understanding graffiti and further establish whether Lexical Pragmatics theory can adequately be used in the analysis of graffiti writings on Matatus.

From the examination of data sampled for analysis, it was revealed that the style of choice of graffiti artists' mode of writing had pure linguistic elements that is, code mixing, sheng', English and Kiswahili was widely used. The graffiti artists would largely use both standard and non-standard language in their writings. Most graffiti had constrained style of writing that is ellipsis, use of abbreviations, contractions, acronyms, short words, fragmented sentences and rich use of phonetics and

phonological elements. It was observed that virtually all graffiti had an element of anonymity.

We can further note that the language used in graffiti on Matatus has some of the characteristics of a natural language. Graffiti is a system of systems, whereby it has diversified linguistic levels of sound, word structure and meaning. The language is linearly presented, written from left to right, though, to some it was not linear. Graffiti is a symbol of system whereby some competence, creativity and diversity in knowledge is highly exhibited to communicate well-intentioned messages.

The data sampled revealed that graffitiists resorted to use writings, drawings and images as opposed to speaking, sounds and gestures. The symbols in graffiti communicate identities as hip-hop culture. It is quite clear from the samples of data collected that graffiti on Matatus is a presentation and identification of a culture 'hip-hop culture'. It was noted also that graffiti has humour in graphology, Morphology and Syntax. All these make graffiti to be popular hence its perpetual outlaw by the authorities.

The styles of graffiti writings were also explored as they formed the basis of continued writing on Matatu walls and seats. Tagging, pissing, blockbuster, wild style and throw-up were predominant with graffitiists. Of the three pissing, wild-style and throw-up are commonly used as they conceal and obscure most graffiti on Matatu walls.

The study also revealed that intentionality and communication could be achieved through the language of graffiti. It was revealed that language is a powerful tool of -

influence on people and their cultures. In addition, sheng, English and Kiswahili are languages appropriate to certain 'audiences'. Grammar of graffiti is complex, through the explication of graphological style of writing, invisibility of text and uniqueness of graffiti text. Punctuation is largely ignored as this seems to waste the writer's time and space. The results also revealed that there are no specific morpho-syntactic structures, phonetic and phonological formations, and there are no specified boundaries between linguistic units such as words, phrases and clauses. A sentence do not therefore distinctively mark on a complete thought since the words are written phonetically/phonologically as if the artiste is thinking of the spoken form as he writes.

The data analysis pointed out that context plays a great role in enhancing meaning in a proposition in a word or a sentence expresses. Messages expressed by graffiti are intentionally intended, sometimes the meaning is implicitly kept, so that interpretation is only clear to the addressee who interprets it in relation to some prior knowledge, background information so to speak. Different context relativity also revealed that different graffiti brings out different meanings. Similarly, different graffiti texts, that is discrete or diffuse brings out different intentions.

### **5.3 General Observations**

English, Kiswahili, Sheng and to a limited extent vernacular featured in our study on graffiti and these were used creatively to catch the attention of the target audience. This improves diversity on the readers, although the study was based on a cosmopolitan location. These languages could be described linguistically at lexical, phonetic and phonological or morphological levels. English was the single most-



favoured language selected in graffiti texts due to its prestigious status as compared to other languages.

The data analysis revealed that although graffiti uses fragmented words or sentences, the audience involved in the communication process are able to interpret successfully the intentioned meaning.

The intentioned meanings of the words enhance the relevance of the information in graffiti, thus, contributing to the audience's successful interpretation of graffiti message.

The study also revealed that the context of the utterance that is the background information shared between the graffitiists and the reader plays an important role in the communication process of graffiti. Finally, the study showed that Lexical Pragmatic theory could adequately account for the successful interpretation of graffiti message on Matatus.

#### **5.4 Challenges**

This study, though interesting and novel it seemed at first had several challenges. Primarily, graffiti texts are difficult to read leave alone clearly comprehending them. This was compounded by the obscurity of the texts and the sophisticated style of writing, especially blockbuster. Second, most graffiti is found in places which were not easily sighted. This was evident especially on the backside of seats. Third, was the frequent repainting of virtually all matatus that had graffiti writings and other forms of writings on the outside and inside walls of matatus. Graffiti has a lot in terms of-

linguistic, social, political, religious and economic. Therefore, the government finds uniquely inappropriate to sustain graffiti on Matatus, hence leading to general crackdown on those that fancy these writings. This art form whose value is highly contested, being reviled by many authorities while also subject to protection within the same jurisdiction (internet).

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The data analysis showed evidence for Lexical Pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening, although broadening processes sufficiently handles much of the graffiti data as opposed to narrowing. Broadening divides further into approximation, metaphorical extension, category extension and neologism. It was revealed that context plays a crucial role in getting meaning and communicative effectiveness of graffiti texts. It was also evident that intentioned meaning in graffiti text on Matatus is widely ignored, but results of data analysis ascertained the existence of meaning.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

From this study, a number of issues require further research. We recommend these issues be given attention in future studies:

- Our scope confined the study on matatus. However, it is worthy noting that more research on graffiti be carried out on tunnels, walls of buildings, stones and slum areas.
- Future research should also be carried out on the impact of language in graffiti or impact of graffiti on language especially First Language.
- Future research be carried out using a Sociolinguistic approach whereby respondents are involved in the interpretation of graffiti.

- Finally, we recommend for a Socio-semiotic theory be applied in the study of graffiti in future especially on signs and icons.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Corpus of Graffiti on Matatus

1. Street - 6, 9, 14, 19, 60
2. Make your life better- Inside the seat of matatu No. 19/60
3. Dance 360-19, 60, 17a
4. Shaft- 6, 9,19,60
5. Akdemkis - Route 19/60, 19c, 14, 28
6. Kiss B -19,60
7. Gambler - all routes
8. Blackberry - 14, 19,60,6,9
9. Chamaa handsome - 19, 60
10. Untouchable - all routes
11. Blazed -19, 14,60,58
12. Wizzy - 19,60
13. No power sharing, one person - 14, 28, 19, 60
14. Remnant Babylon - 19, 60
15. Exortica- 14, 28, 19,60
16. Vuta hewa pole pole usishikwe na homa - 14, 28
17. Don't get carried away wee come - 14, 28
18. Eat or get eaten -9,6, 14,28
19. Kill a season under dawn 19, 60, 14, 28, 32, 42, 58
20. Critical beat down - 6, 9,14, 28, 17a
21. Banjuka 2-6,9, 14,28
22. Riddms - all routes
23. Public donar - 19, 60, 58
24. Groundstyie - 58, 19, 60, 14, 28
25. Negotiator - all routes
26. I feel nothing -58, 6, 9
27. Bout 2 to blast off- 6, 9, 14, 28
28. Stringers all routes
29. Final cut- 14, 28, 32, 42, 6, 9
30. Sippin on syrup - all routes
31. Mo faya- 19, 60, 58, 14,28
32. 4x4 Usain Bolt - 19, 60, 19c
33. Hague siendi -14, 28, 19, 60
34. They cant see us - 19, 60, 17a
35. Google -58, 6,9
36. Oprahization - 58, 6, 9
37. Annan -14,28, 6,9
38. Delamere is back (found on the back of seats of matatus 32, 42)
39. Northbound - 19, 60, 6, 9
40. Painless - almost all routes
41. Spring chicken - 6, 9
42. Hot shot -all routes
43. We lead others follow - 32, 423, 19, 60, 58
44. Babylon - 19, 60, 19c
45. Paradise -14, 28
46. Simba wa yuda - 19, 60,58
47. Try it loose job - 6,9



48. Women are like maize cobs, any can bite from - 6, 9, 14, 28, 58, 19, 60
49. Beer is always wet - 6, 9, 32, 42 (back of seats of route 32/42)
50. Confused -14, 28, 6, 9, 58, 19, 60
51. Looks younger- 6, 9, 14, 19,60,58
52. Soon to bedroom near you - 32, 42
53. Your friend next - 6, 9, 58, 19, 60
54. Akdmks - 19, 60, 19c
55. Akademik- 19, 14, 28, 6, 9
56. Ameze wembe - 14, 28, 19, 60
57. Akademka- 19,60,58
58. We call them, they run - 58, 19, 60
59. Girls like it our way - 6, 9
60. Can sleep on their stomachs -58
61. Dj of hip-hop music - all routes
62. Ass, gas or cash - no one rides free or I'll tell the sheriff
63. Frakass - 14, 28, 19, 60, 6, 9
64. Hitch hikers may be escaping konvikts - 14/28, 32/42
65. Monica Lewinsky - 19/60
66. Secret sessions - 18c, 19, 60
67. Beer is better women-14, 28, 32, 42
68. Young and famous-58, 19, 60, 18c
69. Beats and pisces-19c, 18c, 17a
70. You can have a beer in public-32, 42, 6,9
71. Exploiter
72. Bombastic
73. Always in front