A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF GENDERED LANGUAGE IN GRAFFITI WRITINGS IN COLLEGES OF QUETTA, PAKISTAN

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by

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As the long, arduous and demanding journey of my PhD draws to a close, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Allah all Mighty, the epitome of beneficence and mercy for His blessings. Although the voyage has been fruitful, it has also been challenging. The only thing that sustained me during those difficult times was my unwavering faith in Allah, accompanied by the accompanying sense of steadfastness and peace. Further, I would want to express my deep appreciation and heartfelt wishes to all those individuals who have made this path more manageable for me and helped alleviate the challenges along the way. I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Rita Abdul Rahman Ramakrishna, my supervisor, for all of her help and support during this process. Her feedback, precision, extraordinary work ethic, and desire for excellence have all had a significant influence on my own work. Having her as my supervisor has been a great honour. I also want to express my gratitude to Dr Jasni Sulong the Dean of the School of Humanities at USM for his constant advice and assistance. Speaking of selfless giving, I would especially like to thank my sisters Maria and Asma for their emotional and financial assistance. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude for my exceptional parents. While many people claim that their parents are exceptional, I can confidently assert that mine genuinely are. They provided me with the chance and fortitude to accomplish my aspirations, even in the face of societal resistance. Last but not the least, I would like to express gratitude towards myself for enduring significant challenges, persevering through difficult times, demonstrating patience, and confronting the most difficult period of my life. I dedicate this thesis to myself and I am exceedingly happy of my accomplishment in undertaking this extensive research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Biotech   Biotechnology

BLA   Baloch Liberation Army

BS   Bachelors of Science

BSO   Baloch Student Organization

HDP   Hazara Democratic Party

ISI   Inter- Services Intelligence

MA   Masters of Arts

PSF   Pakhtunkhawa Student Federation

PSO   Pakistan student Organization

LIST OF APPENDICES

SATU ANALISIS SOSIOLINGUISTIK KEJANTINAAN BAHASA DALAM TULISAN GRAFFITI DI KOLEJ DI QUETTA, PAKISTAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti penghasilan grafiti oleh pelajar lelaki dan perempuan yang melanjutkan kolej di Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. Tujuan disertasi ini dihasilkan adalah untuk meneliti fitur linguistik yang digunakan oleh kedua-dua jantina pelajar dalam grafiti mereka. Kajian ini menerapkan fitur linguistik Lakoff (1975) untuk menganalisis bahasa yang digunakan oleh kedua-dua jantina dalam penulisan mereka. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan sama ada bahasa dalam grafiti dipengaruhi oleh stereotaip jantina atau persekitaran sosiobudaya di kawasan Balochistan dan Pakistan. Kajian ini menggunakan penyelidikan kaedah-campur iaitu *Exploratory Sequential Method* sebagai kaedah utama sepanjang proses pengumpulan dan penganalisisan data. Populasi kajian ini meliputi pelajar lelaki dan perempuan daripada dua kolej di Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. Data primer kajian ini dikumpul daripada 1140 inskripsi grafiti daripada dua buah institusi tersebut. Data tersebut disahkan melalui Tinjauan Peranan Jantina (*Gender Role Survey)* dan 20 temu bual separa-struktur. Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa perempuan menghasilkan lebih banyak grafiti berbanding lelaki sekaligus menafikan stereotaip bahawa perempuan tidak terlibat dengan penulisan pada dinding. Penulisan kedua-dua jantina menggambarkan penyimpangan daripada peranan jantina yang konservatif dan penentangan terhadap norma masyarakat. Grafiti perempuan melibatkan kata-kata kesat, puisi dan lagu. Penulisan mereka bertentangan dengan stereotaip yang menanggap perempuan sebagai seseorang yang berbudi bahasa, penyayang, patuh

terhadap perintah dan pemalu. Sebaliknya, mereka menggunakan kata-kata kesat, bersifat dominan dan meluahkan kemarahan serta kebencian. Grafiti lelaki melibatkan topik seperti politik, kandungan seksual dan slanga yang mengukuhkan stereotaip bahawa lelaki sebagai seseorang yang agresif, bersifat dominan dan berkuasa. Walau bagaimanapun, penulisan mereka juga menunjukkan kesopanan, sikap penyayang dan suka bercakap banyak iaitu sifat yang biasanya dikaitkan dengan perempuan. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa wujud perubahan kecil dari segi mentaliti dalam kedua-dua jantina khususnya golongan perempuan yang sedang menikmati kebebasan bersuara dan amalan inklusif jantina. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman tentang jantina dan dinamik kuasa yang menunjukkan bagaimana identiti jantina terbentuk, dipertikaikan dan dibahaskan secara terbuka. Hasil dapatan kajian ini penting untuk menghapuskan ketidaksamaan jantina dan stereotaip di kawasan tersebut.

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF GENDERED LANGUAGE IN GRAFFITI WRITINGS IN COLLEGES OF QUETTA, PAKISTAN

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the graffiti produced by male and female students attending colleges in Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. The aim of this dissertation was to examine the use of linguistic features in graffiti created by individuals of both genders. The study adapted Lakoff (1975) linguistic features to analyse the language used by both genders in their writings. The aim was to analyse the use of language by males and females in Balochistan and to ascertain whether the language in graffiti was shaped by gender stereotypes or mirrored the socio-cultural context of Balochistan and Pakistan. The study followed a mix-method design with Exploratory Sequential Method as its primary method throughout the process of data collection and data analyses. The population of the study comprised of male and female students from two colleges of Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. The primary data for the study was 1140 graffiti inscriptions from both institutions. The data from graffiti was corroborated by a Gender Role Survey and 20 Semi-Structured Interviews. The findings revealed that females' produced more graffiti than males', refuting the stereotype that females do not engage in wall writings. Both genders' writings reflected deviations from traditional gender roles and rebellion against societal norms. Females' graffiti included swear words, poetry, and songs. Their writings contradicted the stereotype that they are polite, compassionate, submissive, and shy. Instead, they used profanity, showed dominance, and expressed anger and hate. Males' graffiti involved topics like politics, sexual content, and slang, which reinforced the stereotype that they are aggressive, dominant, and forceful. However, their writings also showed politeness, compassion,

and talkativeness—traits typically associated with females'. This study reveals a subtle shift in mind-set, with both genders, particularly women, experiencing greater freedom of expression and gender-inclusive practices. The study contributes to the understanding of gender and power dynamics, demonstrating how gender identities are constructed, contested, and publicly debated. These findings are essential for challenging and eradicating gender inequities and stereotypes in the region.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

The first chapter attempts to establish a link between language, graffiti, and gender to determine the premise of the study. The significance of social context in the study of language, graffiti writings, and gender is also pointed out. The chapter comprises sections on statement of the problem, research questions/objectives, the significance of the study, and an explanation of the key terms.

1.2   Dynamics of Language

Language constitutes a vital part of human existence. It is a channel and an agent that plays an important role in establishing, conveying, and spreading general and specific information related to individuals, societies, and cultures. Used as a tool for communication, a language not only mirrors but fortifies the culture, beliefs, and ideologies of the communities it represents, particularly the dominant ones. It echoes the dynamics of power that are entrenched into the systems of race, class, and gender inequality (Andersen, 2000). According to Lakoff (2004), a language makes use of its users, and the users in return make use of the language. She further stated that individuals' choice of words and expressions are guided by their thoughts. Similarly, their feelings about things around them are determined by the words they have in their repertoire of languages. Coupled with their sum of experiences, every individual has a different set of languages in their repertoire. Consequently, the expression of thoughts gets diverse when people belonging to a different gender use a different class of words in varying contexts.

Likewise, every individual based on their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs has their own set of realities with language playing a vital role in the construction of those realities. Gender just like language is a social product that goes through the process of socialization and completely absorbs the constituents of society with all its norms and values, thus mutually contributing to the construction of reality. In other words, along with male and female individual behavior their use of language is also governed by the rules of the society they belong to. Language and gender is an area which over the years has garnered huge attention and is studied widely. Wardhaugh (2010) believed gender plays a significant role in how a language is chosen and used. He suggested that no two people speak the same way, even though they speak the same language. Xia (2013) stated that language together with transmitting and recording social differences also has features that reflect gender differences and disparities. According to Leong (2016), language and forms of communication are overly gendered, be it face-to-face interaction or communication occurring in a particular context such as workplace, politics, religion or on virtual sites, or the geographic landscapes (Bondi, 1992). Coates (2016) and Lakoff (1975) affirmed that the way men speak is given higher reverence as compared to women whose speech is considered disapproving in some societies. Hence, male and female speech is reflective of their behavior, social background, and standing in a particular society.

Like any other mode of language, graffiti is also no exception when it comes to gender differences. The way males produce graffiti is different from females. According to previous research (Arluke et al., 1987; McMenemy & Cornish, 1993; Teixeira et al., 2003; Green, 2003; Matthews et al., 2012; Haslem, 2012), the use of language by both genders in graffiti is quite varied. It tends to reveal a lot about their opinions, inclinations, biases, and overall attitude, thus requiring extensive analysis.

Leong (2016) asserted anonymous areas and private places like bathrooms and the graffiti used in these places are significantly gendered. The difference in features of the language, the linguistic expressions, and vocabulary used in graffiti across gender warrants an in-depth investigation. The subject of how the choice, use, function, and articulation of words in graffiti writings mirror the societal roles and positions of males and females is becoming more pertinent in the current context. Hence, the current research endeavors to study the interplay between gender roles and stereotypes, cultural values, and language choices in graffiti writings.

The following sections discuss graffiti as a mode of communication and common cultural practice in different eras and contexts.

1.3   Graffiti Writings

Graffiti writing is as ancient as human communication (Christen 2003; Teixeira et al., 2003; Daly, 2013). Appel and Frawley (2006; 2002, as cited in Russell, 2008) asserted that history proves that humans had this tendency to leave their impressions on different surfaces, be it in the shape of writings, symbols, or pictures. The settings ranged from caves to trees to desks to bathrooms. According to Phillips (1999) and Russell (2008), the earliest presence of graffiti can be witnessed on wall inscriptions of pre -historic cave inhabitants who attempted to scratch to show their way of living. The earliest traces of graffiti can also be discovered in monuments like Egyptian pyramids, Roman relics of the city of Pompei, and Greek temples (Claramonte & Alonso, 1993). Pereira (2005) affirmed that in ancient Athens, the walls functioned as safe outlets for people's desires, fancies, angst, and hatred. During the reign of Romans, the walls of Pompeii exhibited satirical, electoral, and romantic tags. The Protestants in the sixteenth-century wars of religion and the prisoners of the

French king during the French revolution expressed their anger on the walls against their adversaries. The Nazis during the world war used the walls to express their hatred against the Jews (Pereira, 2005). Teixeira et al. (2003) asserted that despite graffiti's prolonged existence, it only gained popularity with its propagation in urban regions in the 1960s and 1970s.

The word graffiti has a Latin background, it is taken from Latin Graphuim, denoting to write. Rychlicky (2008) defined graffiti as a plural form of the Italian word Graffito, implying a picture drawn on a particular surface. Graffiti also has its Greek roots. The Greek word graphein denotes drawings or writings on the uniform surfaces (Whitehead, 2004). Basthomi (2007) stated that graffiti originally meant certain methods practiced in mural painting, but today it is linked to any type of drawing, scribble, sign, painting, or symbol on any surface, notwithstanding the motives of writing. It might be as brief as a single word or as long as doggerel, it is often, not always, whimsical, witty, and interactive (Abu Jaber et al., 2012). Al-Balqa et al. (2012) and Young (2009), stated that word graffiti implies unlawful, unknown, and contemporary writing or illustration on walls or other surfaces in a public area in an attempt to produce a coherent composition. Whiting and Kollar (2007) highlighted the fact that in modern time's graffiti is not only found in the form of scratches, rather more modern ways of writing with spray cans and magic markers have lately been the trend too.

Graffiti is considered an important cultural phenomenon (Ferrell, 1993; Rawlinson & Farrell, 2010; Al Karazoun & Hamdan, 2021), as these writings are a reflection of the dynamics of society (Gadsby, 1995). According to Gadsby (1995 as cited in Chiluwa, 2008), graffiti or scribbles on the surface of walls is a universal practice. With its ubiquitous presence in human communities, the practice thrives in

the world and is seen on every thinkable surface around. A unique feature of graffiti writing is that after being viewed through multiple lenses it has received a mixed response in different societies at different times. To some, it is art (Robinson, 1990, as cited in Hanauer, 2004; Brighenti, 2010), and to others, it is a form of vandalism (Wolff, 2011; Stewart, 2008; Abaza, 2013), as not only it brings damage to public and private property but also is done without permission by anonymous people (Lombard, 2012; Tracy, 2005; Pietrosanti, 2010). In modern times, the practice of graffiti has earned a negative image as it encompasses crude drawings, pictures, inscriptions, and markings, scratched, chiseled, engraved, and painted on private or public property. Nonetheless, it provides freedom of expression to those who lack the confidence to engage in any kind of communication in public. Thus, the said practice leads them inadvertently, to generate huge amounts of language reserves devoid of pretension or ostentation. It is thought of as a precise scale to measure the process of socialization (Bates & Martin, 1980), and that is the reason it has been taken up by various disciplines and studied through many perspectives (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2017).

There are multiple types of graffiti, each performing a different function based on the setting in which it exists. It may take the shape of drawings, pictures, words, statements, names(tags) written on any physical space which includes; external walls of buildings, desks, buses, subways, and side-walks (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2006; Pani & Sagliaschi, 2009). Matthews et al. (2012), classified graffiti into tourist graffiti (found on picnic tables, tree trunks, and monuments), inner-city graffiti (showing the authors consideration for their names, identity, and territorial markings found on buildings, subways, and bridges) latrinalia (inscriptions, engravings, pictures found on toilet walls) and political graffiti.

The investigations on graffiti have revealed that the styles and objectives of the writings are diverse across cultures. Hanauer (2004) discovered that in metropolitan cities it serves the following three functions: it allows messages which are considered insignificant by other forms of media to enter public discourse. It provides an opportunity for people to raise controversial issues on a public forum. And, it creates avenues for alienated groups to vent their ideologies in public. According to Othen-Price (2006), it attracts adolescent males specifically those hailing from lower socio-economic groups. Blume (1985) stated some common motives that prompt graffitist to resort to the writings include: providing evidence of one's existence, fulfilling the need of expressing oneself, assuring membership in a group, aesthetic pleasure, creativity, boredom, criticism, protest, denunciation, and search for contacts. He believed people express their angst, love, and anger through this practice. Halsey and Young (2006) assumed the strong emotions associated with the writings are recognition, pride, pleasure, and political happenings.

What makes it worthy of research is that this practice has become rampant in modern times despite the emergence of social media apps like Twitter and Facebook that provide a wide range of avenues for expression (Matthews et al., 2012). Notwithstanding its large presence and popularity, the practice of graffiti is not liked by authorities and is considered equivalent to the illegal practice of vandalism, as it results in damage to public property (DeNotto, 2014; El-Nashar & Nayef, 2016; Karlander, 2016; Vanderveen & Eijk, 2016). The presence of graffiti for law-enforcing agencies and to society at large is an indication of ineffectual crime prevention, an affliction, and urban decline (Ferrell, 1993; Graycar, 2003; Halsey & Young, 2002).

As the context in graffiti writings plays a significant role in comprehending its true meaning, the following section sheds light on the settings and spaces abound with these inscriptions.

1.4   Context of the Study

The current study attempts a linguistic analysis of graffiti inscribed on the different surfaces of educational institutions of Balochistan a province of Pakistan, in the backdrop of language and gender. To have a clear comprehension of graffiti writings and their authors, it is pertinent to understand the context and research settings where these inscriptions originate and the social factors or events that impact them. The following sub-sections provide background information about the province of Balochistan with reference to its linguistic diversity, social setup, politics, and education.

1.4.1   Balochistan

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan, forming 43.6 % of the total area (Muhammad, 2014). It is a mountainous desert region bordering Afghanistan on the northwest, Iran to the west, and the Arabian Sea forming its southern boundary (Javaid & Jahangir, 2015). The largest city of the province is Quetta, and it is also the provincial capital. Albeit the largest, it is the least populated province of Pakistan, with a population of 10 million only (Government of Balochistan, 2023). Despite its sparse population, it has an ethnic, tribal, and linguistic variance. The majority of people in the province are multilingual with an ability to converse in more than three languages. Although people speak different languages, there is a similarity in the culture, customs,

and values of the populace. The national language and the lingua franca of the province is Urdu, and English is the official language.

The province is home to diverse ethnic groups. The major ones being Pashtun, with 40% of the population, followed by Baloch and Brahvis with 28% and 26% respectively. The other groups living in the province are Sindhis, Hazaras, Saraikis, Punjabis, and Urdu speaking, who are in minority with 6%.

1.4.2 Social Setup

The edifice of the society in Balochistan is built on a feudal and tribal system. According to Kakar et al. (2016), the region has a patriarchal setup where male members of society have a leading role and are pictured as dexterous, powerful, and controlling. On the contrary, women are considered weak, dependent, and submissive. Paterson (2008) maintained that patriarchy in the province, in general, gives males the prerogative to decide everything for the females. There are limited opportunities for females and they have little access to good education and employment in comparison to males. The World Bank (2010) reported women in Pakistan and particularly those in Balochistan encounter varied issues, starting from poverty, illiteracy, disease, malnutrition to lack of decision making, and gender discrimination. Researchers such as, Mroczek (2014), Kakar et al. (2016) and Soomro et al. (2019) believed that women in Balochistan do not possess decision-making power and are usually expected to stay indoors and consent to the choices of the men of the family. Paterson (2008) contended that women more than men are expected to conduct themselves well, as they believe family honor is judged by a woman's behavior.

On the other hand, the male being the head of the family runs all the affairs of the household. According to Brohi and Baloch (2015), the birth and marriage of a male

child are highly welcomed and celebrated with great fervor by firing bullet shots in the air. Mohyuddin et al. (2012) stated that in the majority of the cases, male members are the sole breadwinners, so the decision-making also lies with them. Parents prefer to invest more in their son's education and upbringing compared to daughters. According to Paterson (2008), although the province is seen as a conservative tribal society with a low literacy rate, it is changing. There are still many people who are aspiring to be part of the modern world they see on television. He believed the void between traditional and modern aspirations is widening. The widening chasms between the young and the old, sects and tribes, and traditional and modern is thus leading to conflicts. Mohyuddin et al. (2012) asserted that today, many parents are willing to send their daughters to educational institutions in cities for higher education. The middle class in the urban section of the province is attempting to come out of the tribal setup, female living in cities have access to education, employment, and other opportunities for them to explore with fewer restrictions enforced on them. At present, many females are working in male-dominated domains, such as banks, offices, and stores (as salespersons). They are posted on coveted positions in the bureaucracy, forces, police, judiciary, and education and taking an active part in mainstream politics (Mroczek, 2014).

As far as the use of language is concerned, the said society has certain norms for both genders regarding the usage and choice of language. According to Ghani et al. (2007), females are expected to speak softly and express little in the presence of males within the family and outside. They are also expected to avoid the use of curse words and refrain from speaking about taboo topics. Mixed gatherings, except for those in an official capacity, are not appreciated. It is desired of females to keep their voice low in mixed gatherings and anticipated not to contradict the male members of

their family. Men are also expected to speak softly in mixed congregations and avoid the use of indecent conversation (mainly expletives) especially in the presence of women. The speech patterns of men often exhibit traits of authority and superiority, while women's speech patterns tend to display obedience and respect (Rahman, 1998; Ghani et al., 2007)

1.4.3   Politics

Politics in Balochistan has spun around pro-federalist and anti-federalist elements of different nationalist parties (Muhammad, 2014). Having been the center stage of ethnic and sectarian violence it has encountered five insurgencies in the last two decades. Crushed by military intervention, the ongoing one started in 2005 (Haq, 2006; Tariq, 2013) and has now lost its intensity (Mroczek, 2014). The presence of Taliban and Baloch nationalism coupled with the emergence of militant organizations and intervention from neighboring countries continue to plague the province.

The political situation and ethnic conflict in the province also had implications for educational institutions in the region. According to Bansal (2010), ethnic conflict in the province leading to military operations together with state-led policies has resulted in the advent of politics in educational institutions of Balochistan. At present, there are political organizations (with female wings) representing Baloch and Pashtuns, two major ethnic groups of the province, operating in educational centers. These organizations claim to be working for the well-being of the students of their respective ethnic groups. According to Faiz (2016), the government has taken harsh measures to eradicate the influence of politics in universities and colleges resulting in more resentment amongst the youth against the state.

1.4.4   Education in Balochistan

The education system in Balochistan is divided into the middle, primary and higher education. Colleges in Balochistan, though working under the higher education system, also offer classes for 11 and 12-grade students who are part of higher secondary schools. Quetta city has six (6) government colleges (offering Bachelor level degree), four (4) for girls and two (2) for boys. The city also consists of 4 Inter colleges (High Secondary School) and various private colleges for both males and females (Balochistan Education Management Information System [EMIS], 2017). Owing to the conservative social setup of the province there are separate colleges for boys and girls in the entire province (including Quetta city).

The medium of instruction at the tertiary level in Pakistan shifts to English from Urdu (it is English in private schools), as it is also the official language of the country (EMIS, 2017). The other languages constituting the linguistic repertoire of students of Balochistan include Urdu (lingua franca and the national language) and their respective native languages such as; Balochi, Pashto, Brahvi, Farsi, Sindhi, Seraiki, and Punjabi. Since the linguistic repertoire of people in Balochistan comprises a variety of languages, the student's conversations are usually plurilingual, with words and phrases taken from different languages and code-switching and mixing a norm.

1.5   Statement of the Problem

A language, written or spoken, can be a great source of knowledge on the way a society functions. By encompassing its social setup, norms, traditions, and religious beliefs it reflects an individual's thoughts, emotions, biases, and overall attitude. Thus, a language used in a society is also a manifestation of the status of both genders and the influence of stereotypes and cultural norms on them. Graffiti is one such type of

written communication which over the years has received great attention from scholars and researchers owing to its pervasive nature and place in a culture (Rawlinson & Farrell, 2010; Trahan, 2011); (Blommaert, 2016, as cited in Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2017). The importance of graffiti comes from the fact that these inscriptions provide great insight into the psychological, social, and cultural facets of a community. An in-depth exploration of the aforementioned facets is paramount if the well-being of a community is the end goal. This is especially true for the sections of the society that consider themselves marginalized (Farnia, 2014; El-Nashar & Nayef, 2016) and find graffiti an easy outlet for their repressed thoughts. Hence, the study of these writings is crucial for comprehending the thought processes of the weaker groups.

Like any other form of language, graffiti also is influenced by the socio-cultural backdrop of the society it is found in. Although it has remained an important part of cultures, the way different styles of writing behave in diverse contexts remains to be an interesting query that needs examination (Farnia, 2014). Since it is always in the backdrop of varied contexts that graffitists convey their expressions, it becomes important to study different settings, milieus, and cultures that host graffiti. Similarly, the way both genders behave in varying contexts across time and communities is another inquiry that requires investigation. According to Wodak (1997, as cited in Wardhaugh, 2010) gender is not static and the meaning of being a female and a male in society varies across generations, ethnicities, and social classes. This makes it pertinent to study gender differences and disparities conveyed through language in every period and social context, which in the case of the present study is presented in form of graffiti.

Furthermore, Lakoff (1975) presented the idea that the difference in men's and women's use of language reflects their role and status in society. She contended that

the linguistic style of females comprises patterns that manifest respect, hesitancy, and uncertainty, and those of male evince strength, power, and directness. Tannen (1990, p.24) labeled female conversation as 'rapport talk' and men's as 'report talk'. While, Eckert and McConnell-Ginnet (2013) claimed that women use more standard language than men. Nonetheless, the majority of these studies centered on face-to-face conversations (Cameron et al., 1988; Holmes, 1995; Coates, 1996; Kunsmann, 2000; Al-Harahsheh, 2014) and not on written content, which according to Tannen (1992), is significantly different from the oral mode of discourse. One-on-one conversations receive prompt reactions from interlocutors and listeners both, making the participants more cautious of what they say. Secondly, the responses are not always based on gender preferences only but on other factors too. Therefore, there are chances of conversations not showing the true personas of the participants. On the contrary, the data in the form of graffiti is impromptu, direct, and more natural, thus providing more insight into the personalities of its writers. Moreover, these writings depict the ideologies and identities more effectively as compared to oral speech (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001), thus making it essential for it to be explored.

The choice of linguistic features and communicative strategies not only highlight the linguistic styles of both genders but also unravel the impact (or shift) of gendered stereotypes which are mostly centered on traditions in society and are 'resistant to change'(Amjad & Rasul, 2017, p.163). In the context of Pakistan where the stereotypes regarding male and female roles, traits, and speech are still quite strong due to the patriarchal setup of the society (Hadi, 2019: Habiba et al., 2016; Tarar & Pulla, 2014). Gender roles are based on tradition, convention, and conservative notions of the way female and males conduct themselves. Young women are expected to refrain from using inappropriate language, remain unassertive and soft-spoken. In

contrast, men are expected to be loud and outspoken in their talk. Salam (2021) maintained that male inclination towards sexuality is overlooked by Pakistani society, whilst the same attitude in females is dealt with harshly. Nevertheless, the social setup in Balochistan is also observed to be transitioning in terms of female education, equality, and empowerment which merits a study on the current status of both genders. Since graffiti produced in any area is context-bound and takes place in natural settings the information derived from it is a reflection of society with its socio-cultural underpinnings. The choice of linguistic devices in these writings would determine if the stereotypes are still intact in the region or whether the said society has witnessed a transition or reversal of gender roles.

The practice of writing graffiti similar to other parts of Pakistan also has its existence in Quetta city in general and institutions of learning in particular. Despite the fact that it is illegal, the public and private walls of the city and educational institutions are adorned with a variety of writings, including those in English, Urdu, and local vernaculars. Despite the huge presence of graffiti in education milieus (colleges and universities) in Pakistan, these locales have not been studied in past. Previous studies on graffiti in educational contexts and beyond (Nwoye, 1993; Obeng, 2000a; McCormick, 2003; Ahmed, 1981; Ferrell, 1993) primarily examined the anonymity of the inscriptions and conducted thematic analyses of graffiti as a manifestation of deviance, grievances, revolutionary ideologies, and vandalism directed at authorities or government entities. These researchers have attempted to bring out varied sexual, religious, and political themes and content out of the writings (Green, 2003; Otta, 1993; Bartholome & Snyder, 2004; Farnia, 2014). Scholars such as, Bates and Martin (1980), Otta et al. (1996) and Schreer and Strichartz (1997) have also endeavored to analyze gender differences in graffiti writing but again in terms of content, themes,

and frequency. Furthermore, previous literature focused on the causes that lead to the production of these writings by both genders (Nwoye, 1993; Obeng, 2000b; Mc Cormick, 2003; Şad & Kutlu, 2009). Examination of literature brings to fore that studies in the past largely explored toilet graffiti (Hanauer, 2004; Madero, 2012; Haslam, 2012; Leong 2016; Mangeya, 2018; Wang et al., 2020) and graffiti found in open areas received little attention. The topics explored in toilet graffiti were again preponderantly types and frequency of taboo themes and not linguistic features. The present study thus aims to look into the graffiti found in both open and hidden areas to better understand the varied style of language use in the Pakistani context. It investigates linguistic features by employing the framework derived from Lakoff (1975) to address the use of language and stereotypes. The framework helps in the identification of the influence of stereotypes and gender differences through graffiti.

The presence of graffiti in Balochistan particularly in the institutions of learning, therefore, calls for a comprehensive investigation of this form of writing to analyze the working of language amongst the educated youth of the region and through it determine their mindset, social status/roles and adherence to cultural norms and stereotypical ideas.

1.6 Research Objectives

The present study is informed by the following research questions:

1) To compare the linguistic features used by male and female students in the graffiti writings in higher educational institutions of Pakistan

2) To explore the influence of stereotypes associated with gender on the language choice in the graffiti writings by male and female students in higher educational institutions of Pakistan

3) To examine the ways local sociocultural context are reflected in the graffiti writings by male and female students in higher educational institutions of Pakistan

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the stated research Objectives, this study outlines the following research Questions:

1) What are the linguistic features used by male and female students in the graffiti writings in higher educational institutions of Pakistan?

2) How are the stereotypes associated with gender influence the language choice in the graffiti writings by male and female students in higher educational institutions of Pakistan?

3) How is the local sociocultural context reflected in the graffiti writings by male and female students in higher educational institutions of Pakistan?

1.8 Significance of the Study

The investigation of graffiti inscriptions in Pakistan offers significant contributions to the understanding of gender dynamics and power dynamics that are present in the country's culture. The study's primary contribution lies in its examination of the influence of societal standards and norms on the language choices of both males and females, as evidenced by the information obtained from graffiti. This analysis sheds light on the functioning of the society under-study. Pakistani society built on a patriarchal social setup is lately observed to be transitioning towards globalization, enlightenment, and equal opportunities for both genders. In the current scenario, by

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documenting a change in gender roles or lack thereof, the present study makes a substantial contribution to the field of language and gender in Pakistan. Besides, it aids in assessing whether long-standing stereotypes linked to both genders are securely entrenched or undergoing transformation, which is a crucial consideration within the country's setting and remains unexplored thus far. The study therefore contributes towards exploring the status and role of both genders through their choice of language amidst a changing environment. It shows how gender identities are created, debated, and challenged in public spaces. The ability to comprehend and analyse this information is of utmost importance in addressing gender inequities and fostering societal transformation. The findings can make significant contributions towards addressing and removing deep-rooted gender typecasts that subsequently can inform legislative actions in addressing gender inequities and promoting inclusive language practises in public contexts.

The present research also draws attention of authorities towards a practice which despite being a norm in all the educational institutes is not attended to. The study stresses the importance of researching different linguistic and social aspects of graffiti writings, and the commonality of the practice in Pakistan. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of individual psychologies and the broader social, cultural, and political dynamics within society.

1.9   Definition of Key Terms

The key terms that pertain to the study include:

- **Graffiti**

Graffiti is defined as any inscription or imagery on the walls or surfaces of public edifices, parks, restrooms, buses, or trains, typically containing political or sexual themes, declarations of affection, propositions, or profane language (Basthomi, 2007).

- **Context**

The context is defined as the "network of physical, spatial, temporal, social, interactional, institutional, political, and historical circumstances in which participants practice discourse" (Young, 2009, p. 1).

- **Tagging**

Tagging is defined as a kind of graffiti engraved in the form of stylized signature, monogram, word, or name on public and private physical spaces. It is considered an unlawful act and a defacement to communities, however, it still fascinates adolescents and remains a source of amusement for them universally (Brown et al., 2016).

- **Open areas**

They are open in the sense of access; no invitation or permission is required; anyone, irrespective of ability, merit, or objective, may utilise the space to express themselves artistically, politically, or otherwise (Hannerz & Kimvall, 2019).

- **Closed or Private Place**

A space where individuals are mostly on their own, sheltered by the confidentiality and annoymity which is assured by the surrounding walls of the place, such as toilets (Teixeira et al., 2003).

- **Gender**

Gender is defined as a social trait involving the entire range of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural variations existing between men and women (Wardhaugh, 2010).

- **Gender Stereotypes**

Gender stereotypes are defined as, attributes, characteristics and traits assigned to men and women by the society with a prescription of what is appropriate for them and how they should conduct themselves (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

- **Gender Roles**

Gender roles are defined as role, behavior or attitude that are determined by society for men and women based on that society's values and notions about gender (Blackstone, 2003).

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter encompassed a description of the problem of the study in the backdrop of the province of Balochistan. An overview of the province of Balochistan was conducted highlighting its language, political situation, education, and status of

genders. The relevance and significance of investigating the research problem were highlighted by pointing out gaps in previous literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The chapter outlines a review of literature on language, gender and society. In particular, it covers gender variations in speech and written language through the perspective of major exponents of the field. The chapter also includes the role of language and gender in graffiti writings. The significance of context and setting in the production of graffiti is covered in this chapter.

2.2   Language and Gender

Gender differences relating to the way men and women interact, their relationship towards each other, and their use of language have been of interest to researchers over the years. Language and gender, both being a part of the social order of a community, do not exist in isolation. There is a close and strong connection between both phenomena's. Language operates within a social system and cannot be segregated from its social functions (Bakhtin, 1981; Fairclough, 1989; Halliday, 1978). Listeners can make conjectures about the speaker's social standing and identity from their speech style (Bradac, 1990; Giles & Street, 1994). As when people learn a language, they not only learn how it is put together, but also how the words and phrases they use relate to everyday life and the rules of society (Halliday, 1978). But social identity and linguistic attitude are not always compatible (Ochs, 1993). In other words, people affiliated with similar social identities do not necessarily demonstrate the same linguistic structures. According to Ochs (1993), people may change viewpoints several

times and reconstruct their social identities in a short period. In a nutshell, it is in social interactions that social identities are developed.

Gender is a fundamental part of social identity and is constantly reconstructed and reinvented in discourse (Baxter, 2002). Over the years gender as performance has been linked to Judith Butler (1990), who argued that masculinity and femininity are the results of our actions. She felt gender is always "doing" that identity is established through performance and expression. She acknowledged that social norms affect gender performance, but both genders can resist and challenge them, even at the risk of repercussions (Cameron, 1997).

Language and gender studies help people understand language as a social practice that affects how they think and interact with others. Because gender is ingrained in complicated social behaviours. These behaviours are tied to human traits and power dynamics, but indirectly and in a changing way (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Gender describes behaviour and cognitive perspectives learned through segregated socialisation of men and women. The distinction between sex and gender helps separate biological and cultural elements that affect male and female behavior (Philips, 1980).

According to Mill (2000), gender variances in language are not as simple as the different linguistic performances of males and females as group. It is well known that men and women speak differently and behave differently based on their social roles. The analysis of the communication between men and women shows that there is not only variation in word choice but also strategies employed by both genders (Lopez-Rocha, 2005).

In the 1960s, North American feminism influenced academic, public, and popular literature and culture, highlighting gender speech differences (Flotow, 2004). Feminism showed that men in power create the worldview and power ideology that women must follow, to their detriment (Flotow, 2004). The argument that structure of English is sexist has led to this perspective in linguistics. According to Philips (1980), the English language's sexist idioms perpetuate male ideology by demeaning and erasing women, as seen by their language use.

The following section includes a discussion on three prominent names in the field of language and gender who proposed that both males' and females' use of different forms of language is a reflection of society's expectation of them and not biologically inherent in them.

2.2.1 Lakoff (1973, 1975, 2003)

Language and gender were not considered serious topics of research until the 1960s. It was in 1975 with the publication of Lakoff's book *Language and Woman's place* that the connection of language and gender took a major stride. Her article titled, *Woman's Language* served as a catalyst for plenty of research that occurred in this field in the following years (Baranauskienė & Adminienė, 2012). Lakoff (1973) introduced the first study of language which established that language used by women and language used in describing women plays a role in suppressing women's identity. She introduced the label *women's language* which denotes that men and women speak using different styles. Lakoff (1975) argued that women's language is taught to them in childhood and expected to be employed in adulthood at the price of their expressiveness. Thus, women cannot completely express themselves due to societal linguistic restrictions, which perpetuates social gender inequality. She laid out a set of

presumptions on what features are prominent in women's language. Lakoff (1973) was the first linguist who propounded that the language style adopted by women is an inferior style that exhibits powerlessness. She mentioned that a female language style demonstrates a dearth of confidence, insecurity, and apprehensiveness (Lakoff, 1973). Additionally, women's language is hesitant, uncertain, and respect-giving, whereas men's is strong, powerful, and straightforward (Lakoff, 2003). Furthermore, Lakoff (1973) delineated language forms that exhibit gender-specific characteristics: lexical distinctions, color names, strong versus weak expletives, neutral versus women adjectives, tag questions, question intonation, and strength of directive speech acts. Her assertion (Lakoff, 1975 as cited in Cameron et al., 1988) suggests that there is no coincidental correlation between an unassertive speech style and femininity. Lakoff believed social conventions kept women passive. She thought women's language was influenced by their social status and vulnerability, which helped maintain their subordination. Lakoff (2003) contended that in a male-dominated society, authority and forcefulness are considered masculine and avoided by women. Females, in lieu, are taught to learn attributes like weakness, passivity, and respect for men. Females must exhibit these features in their speech and behaviour to conform to societal expectations. It continues when girls emulate their mothers who are their role models.

Lakoff (1973) found phrases that are semantically male yet refer to general things without a sex. The statement *he who has little and says it is enough, has more than he who has much and wants more* uses the pronoun *he*. This example works for men and women, but generalisation excludes women. She called these examples sexist because generics exclude women. She thought women were passive because they could not express themselves and had to use trivial language. This in turn makes them use forms that exhibit uncertainty regarding what they discuss.