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**A Semio-Thematic Analysis of Graffiti in Selected  
Departements At Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou**

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## **Dedication**

*This achievement is dedicated first and foremost to my beloved father, whose sacrifices, wisdom, and unwavering love have paved my path. I am forever grateful for your tireless efforts. May your life be filled with peace and happiness.*

*To my dear mother, whose boundless care, patience, and devotion have been my greatest strength. Your love has always lifted me up, and I am forever indebted to you. May God bless you with endless joy.*

*To my siblings, whose encouragement and belief in me have been invaluable you are my rock and my refuge.*

*To my little brother Yacine, who brings joy and love into my life, your innocent smile and boundless energy remind me every day of the beauty in the little things. You are my heart's delight, and I dedicate this achievement to you.*

*Finally, to my family, friends, and loved ones your support and companionship have made this journey meaningful. Thank you for believing in me every step of the way.*

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*To the one who honored me by carrying his name , the one who dedicated his efforts and soul to help me achieve a high academic degree, and who has been my support throughout my life. My beloved father May God protect and bless him.*

*To the heart of my happiness and the source of my strength.... my dear mother...Thanks to her efforts, her prayers, and her upbringing, I have reached this level today.*

*To my dear Aunt Dalila and cherished Grandmother, your care, guidance, and prayers have been invaluable. Both of you have played crucial roles in shaping the person I am now.*

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## **Abstract**

The overall aim of this study is to deeply understand the semiotic and thematic patterns present in graffiti as a form of expression, communication, and cultural transmission within university settings. This study has three main objectives. Firstly, to identify the different languages used to create the different Graffiti. Secondly, to determine the different semiotic elements and themes used to produce Graffiti. Finally, to explore the underlying social and cultural messages and meanings embedded within these artworks. Through qualitative content analysis and semiotic analysis based on Peirce's triadic model, the study examined the graffiti, categorizing them into distinct themes and interpreting their deeper meanings and cultural significances. The analysis revealed ten major themes: Culture and Identity, Figures, Religion, Politics, Biology, Education, Personal and Emotional, Academic Notes, Quotes, and Music and Lyrics. These themes reflected the students' concerns, interests, and identities, with graffiti showcasing Berber culture and identity, important historical figures, varied religious themes, political messages, expressions related to academic life, and personal messages. The use of multiple languages, including Berber, Arabic, French, English, and hints of Spanish, underscored the multilingual context of the students' expressions and the importance of language in conveying their messages and identities. The study concludes that graffiti in university settings is a multifaceted form of expression that encompasses a wide range of themes and linguistic diversity, serving as a crucial medium for students to communicate their cultural heritage, political views, personal beliefs, and academic challenges. It is recommended that universities recognize and support graffiti as a legitimate form of student expression by creating designated spaces for graffiti art, encouraging discussions about its content, and integrating graffiti studies into relevant academic programs. Future research could extend to all university departments and campuses, employing comparative studies to explore graffiti's evolution in response to internal and external influences, enhancing understanding of its role in global cultural expression among students.

**Key terms:** Graffiti, themes, UMMTO, Peirce's triadic model, Semiotic Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**G N°: Graffiti Number**

**MMUTO: Mouloud Maameri University of TiziOuzou**

**Q: Question**

**TA: Thematic Analysis**

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# *General Introduction*

## **Statement of the Problem**

Graffiti is an artistic practice that involves the creation of visual representations of words or symbols on public surfaces. It is often associated with urban environments and serves as a means of self-expression, cultural commentary or political activism. Graffiti has transcended its historical association with vandalism to become recognized as a prominent urban art form, serving as a visual language through which individuals articulate their opinions, ideologies, and societal concerns (Merrill, 2015; Schacter, 2014). While traditionally associated with urban streets and public spaces, graffiti has found its way into the academic environment as a unique form of expression that combines artwork with intellectual discourse within the walls of educational institutions. It can be spotted on walls, desks, restroom stalls, and other surfaces across campuses.

Graffiti has been welcomed by universities and colleges all around the world as a form of artistic expression and communication for students to express themselves, voice their opinions, and engage in discourse about critical, social, cultural, and political concerns (Phillips, 1999). This phenomenon has picked scholarly interest since graffiti appears not only as an act of defacement but also as a strong form of expression that reflects the varied narratives of protest, aspiration, and cultural identity in Algeria.

Previous studies have explored the cultural, social, and political dimensions of graffiti within various contexts, including urban environments and public spaces. At the Algerian national level few studies have been conducted, for example: Zoughebi et al., (2020) conducted research entitled *A Semiotic Analysis of Urban Graffiti: The Case of Bejaia City at Bejaia University in Algeria*. The findings of the study show that the graffiti mostly represents Algerian identity and social realities, the study classified the graffiti based on their meanings using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic theory and discovered that the main language utilized in the graffiti are Berber, Arabic, French, and English. Furthermore, the research found that graffiti in Bejaia City

was created Both artistically and non-artistically, demonstrating a variety of styles and techniques to express Cultural identity and societal problems through urban art. At the international level, a study was conducted by Farnia (2014) to analyze University students' graffiti on classroom walls using thematic analysis to examine how students use Graffiti to convey their beliefs and identities. The research findings indicated that university Students' graffiti on classroom walls in Isfahan, Iran contains a variety of themes, including Expressions of love and hatred, political commentary, religious sentiments, dates poetry, class notes, signatures of complaints or despair, self-expression, and drawings.

In recent years, Mouloud Maameri University in Tizi Ouzou has seen a considerable transformation in Its visual landscape, with graffiti art decorating its walls in several academic departments, representing distinct subjects reflecting departmental identities students' concerns, and the larger sociopolitical context in which the university functions. However, while previous studies have investigated graffiti in urban, national, and even university settings in other countries there is a notable lack of a specific focus on graffiti within Mouloud Maameri University in Tizi Ouzou, Algeria, particularly through semiotic and thematic analysis. Therefore, there is a clear gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive understanding of graffiti within university campuses, particularly in Algeria, via the perspective of semiotic and thematic analysis. By addressing this gap, this study aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of graffiti as a mode of communication and expression in academic settings, as well as the cultural, social and political dimensions that shape its creation and interpretation at Mouloud Maameri University.

### **Aims and Significance of the Study**

Graffiti serves as a vast visual and expressive tool used to express student voice, transmit cultural and social messages more freely. Therefore, The overall aim of the study to understand deeply the semiotic and thematic patterns present in graffiti as a form of expression,

communication and cultural transmission within university settings. The primary aim of this study is to deeply understand the semiotic and thematic patterns inherent in graffiti as a form of expression, communication, and cultural transmission within university settings. The study is guided by four main objectives. Firstly, to identify the different languages used to create the different Graffiti. Secondly, to determine the different semiotic elements and themes used to produce Graffiti. Finally, to explore the underlying social and cultural messages and meanings embedded within these artworks.

This research is significant because it offers an additional new valuable perspective to the works submitted in Mouloud Mameri University's English department by exploring the concept of Graffiti. While few previous studies have been conducted regarding Graffiti, none of them were conducted at this University. This paper aims to bridge that gap, by investigating graffiti as a means of personal, social, and cultural expression within Mouloud Mameri University's departments, and exploring the subject from a semi-on-thematic perspective.

## **Research Questions**

In an attempt to reach the objectives mentioned previously, the following questions are intended to guide our research:

Q1: What are the predominant languages utilized in creating graffiti within Moulou Mammeri University?

Q2: What are the different semiotic elements and thematic motifs used to draw and write these graffiti?

Q3: What social and cultural messages and meanings are conveyed through graffiti artworks in UMMTO?

## **Methodology**

This study focuses on the semio-thematic analysis of graffiti within selected departments at Mouloud Mammeri University, employing a qualitative research approach. The methodology involves describing and analyzing semiotically and thematically the corpus gathered from various departments at MMU. Data collection is conducted through observational methods, including visits to selected departments and photographing the graffiti found there, encompassing departments such as English, French, Arabic, and Tamazight.

To analyze the graffiti, this study adopts Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic framework (1931), focusing on the triad of object, representamen, and interpretant. Additionally, thematic analysis is employed to identify and examine the different themes, concepts, and issues addressed in the graffiti.

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation follows a traditional structure consisting of a General Introduction, four chapters, and a General Conclusion. The "General Introduction" outlines the research problem, makes claims, identifies the aims and significance of the study, presents the research question, and describes the research techniques and methodology, as well as the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter, "Review of Literature," provides a theoretical framework and a review of previous studies and works related to the subject under investigation, as well as definition of key terms. The second chapter, "Research Methodology," explains the study's methodology, including data collection tools and analysis procedures. The third chapter, "Presentation of Findings," organizes and demonstrates the results and findings of the research. The fourth chapter, "Discussion of Findings," interprets the study's outcomes, answers the research questions, and evaluates the proposed hypotheses. Finally, the "General Conclusion" summarizes the dissertation's content, presents the conclusions drawn from the discussion, and offers suggestions for further research.

## *Chapter One*

### *Review of the Literature*

## **Introduction**

This chapter aims to explore the foundational concepts critical to our research topic. It is structured into four primary sections. Section delves into graffiti, examining its definitions, origins, history, types, evolution, and significance within university settings. Additionally, it reviews some previous studies conducted on the same issue. The second section deals with the concepts of semiotics, semiology, and social semiotics. The third section discusses the notion of sign, and its types, and introduces the concept of sign according to Saussure and Peirce. The final section elucidates the theoretical framework guiding our research, particularly Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic theory.

### **Graffiti**

#### **Definitions**

Graffiti is a form of visual communication involving the creation of visual or textual representations on public or private surfaces without proper authorization. It can encompass images, text, or illustrations created by individuals or groups for various purposes anonymously. According to the Oxford dictionary (2013), graffiti is defined as "writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place.". Similarly, Basthomi (2007) explains that Graffiti in English originally refers to certain painting techniques of mural painting; however, nowadays it is associated with any types of scratches, drawings, paintings, symbols, signs on walls, or anywhere regardless of what motivates the writing. Moreover, Abel and Buckley (1977) claim that "Graffiti is a form of communication that is both personal and free of the everyday social strains that normally prevent people from giving uninhibited reign to their thoughts. As such, these sometimes-crude inscriptions offer some intriguing insights into the people who author them and into the society in which these people belong" (p.3).

In essence, graffiti serves as a means for individuals to communicate their thoughts and feelings without societal restrictions that limit free expression. Along with this, Taylor (1999: 290–291) contends that graffiti consists of thoughts and feelings translated into short written phrases or visual codes with vivid meanings inspired by society, making it a societal product. (as cited in Al Karazoun, 2021). That is to say, Graffiti is a way for individuals or communities to communicate with each other solely through anonymous phrases or images. Moreover, the message provided by graffiti reflects to us what is going on inside the society, because generally people tend to use walls to describe and express their political or controversial opinions. Blume (1985) claims that there are socio-psychological motives that drive writing graffiti, viz., express oneself, document group membership, criticize and protest, mark out territories, and search for contacts, among others. ( as cited in Al Karazoun,2021) .He reports that people who write about perceptions, memories, plans, etc. without addressing a particular partner reveal part of their cognitive thinking and mental processing. Lapyai (2003: 39) proposes other psychological reasons that motivate writing graffiti such as delivering pleasure, releasing feelings, constructing one’s identity, insulting and showing hostility, revealing philosophical opinions, giving advice, etc. That is, people write graffiti to fulfill psychological needs for communication by expressing perceptions, memories, showing hostility, giving advice, and more. It serves as a platform for individuals to communicate their cognitive thinking and mental processing.

In the same line of thinking, Manco (2002), suggests that, “Graffiti art, as an idea, has always existed alongside other artist activities, the difference being that it is a mode of self-expression using methods that are seen as criminal, or outside the conventional art world, rather than specifically sanctioned or commissioned art” (p. 9) . Also, It is viewed as an egalitarian means of expressions, giving voice to the marginalized, helping them to speak the unspeakable (Best, 2003; Bloch, 2000; Gadsby, 1995; Moonwomon, 1995; Obeng, 2000b). In other words, it reflects on social and political views giving voice to marginalized individuals to speak

the unspeakable. Despite its artistic and social value, graffiti is often perceived as a criminal act and a form of vandalism. Hookstra (2009) characterizes graffiti as a type of vandalism that can signal more serious forms of crime in an area, as she cites Gibson (1994), who states: "...walls covered with graffiti suggest tears in the fabric of society. It is synonymous with a loss of control. It says there is a group of people who can and will destroy public property and who can show ineffective security." (p. 1) (as cited in Zoughebi & Kasmi, 2020). This suggests that graffiti is seen as a form of vandalism that indicates a breakdown of societal control and may potentially lead to more serious crimes.

### **Origins of Graffiti**

Graffiti is derived from the Greek word « graphien », meaning to « write », and is the plural form of the Italian word « graffito », which implies drawings, scratching, and inscription . This is an effective description because it highlights the fact that graffiti is a method of communicating thoughts to the public eye. The Oxford English Dictionary defines graffiti as "writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place". The definition focuses on the physical act of creating graffiti, which is often done in unauthorized or public areas, and serves as a beginning point for investigating its evolution and significance. Graffiti has long been connected with vandalism and unlawful activity since it is frequently created on public property without permission. However, graffiti has grown beyond its original definition to incorporate a broader range of artistic expression , such as elaborate murals and street art that beautify metropolitan environments around the world . This transition from a primarily illegal activity to a type of respectable art has created new opportunities for academic research.

## **History and Evolution**

Graffiti, as an art form, has a rich history and has evolved significantly over time (Graf, 2021). Graffiti has its origins in ancient times, with the first drawings on walls appearing in caves thousands of years ago, some of the earliest known examples of graffiti date back to the Ancient Egypt where cave paintings have been found that are approximately 40,000 years old. In ancient Rome, the oldest written graffiti was found around 2500 years ago; graffiti was used as a form of communication and was not considered vandalism. Similarly, in ancient Greece, graffiti was used to express political and social views. These early forms of graffiti were often used for political, religious, or personal purposes, and were not necessarily seen as vandalism. In more recent times, New York City saw the emergence of graffiti as we know it today in the late 1960s, building on the earlier beginnings of the art form in Philadelphia in the early 1960s. In the 1970s, the art form became extremely popular as individuals began to write their names or "tags" on buildings all across the city (Gastman and Neelon, 2011). When graffiti first started off, it was frequently connected to street gangs, who utilized it to demarcate their areas and interact with one another. Novelist Norman Mailer and The New York Times were the first to adopt the term "graffiti".

When graffiti got more popular in the 1980s and it became more difficult to write on subway cars without getting detected, many artists started utilizing canvases or building rooftops as substitute surfaces. Graffiti gained more popularity at this time when it was linked to the hip-hop subculture. Street painter such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring went on to become successful worldwide artists in the gallery scene (Gastman and Neelon, 2011). Graffiti continued to evolve throughout the 1990s, incorporating new techniques and styles. Stencils were first used by artists to produce more intricate pieces, such as landscapes and portraits. Graffiti was also impacted by the emergence of digital technology, as artists experimented with virtual environments. Graffiti has become a worldwide phenomenon, with large-scale pieces

created both legally and on commission. It is always changing, reflecting social challenges and cultural changes. There was substantial debate about this transfer from the streets to the galleries; some considered it as a "selling out" of the graffiti movement, while others recognized its artistic merit (Taylor, Pooley and Carragher, 2016, p. 199). The debate over whether graffiti is art or vandalism has been ongoing, with some viewing it as a form of rebellion and others as a recognized form of public art. Over time, the way people view graffiti has changed to reflect societal changes and the increasing acknowledgment of its artistic value. Large-scale graffiti artwork is now made under legal commission and is a popular tourist destination in many cities worldwide.

## **Types of Graffiti**

Graffiti encompasses various forms, each with its own distinctive characteristics and cultural significance. The following are some of the most common types

### **Tag**

Tags or taggings serve as unique representations of individuals within the graffiti subculture. Tagging, as it is called in graffiti art society, is considered the root of graffiti, and the most common way to mark one's territory (Bowen, 1999). Simplified forms of quick, stylized signatures composed of letters and/or numbers (Gomez, 1993), tags contain a highly stylized form of typography and lettering that is usually illegible by outsiders (Gross, D. & Gross, T., 1993). It means that, tags often include specific characteristics of the writers, such as their names, initials, addresses, or other personal elements. These personalized elements add an individual touch to the tag allowing the writers (graffiti artists) to establish their identity and leave their marks and signatures to the viewers. Tags are characterized by their simplicity and being easy to read and mainly written with one color.

## **Throw-up**

Research has shown that throw-ups in graffiti serve as an intermediary stage between tags and more intricate pieces. They are characterized by bubble-style lettering and incorporating two or more colors, throw-ups are relatively easy to create, often consisting of two or three letters representing the artist's pseudonym. In other words, throw-ups represent a swift form of graffiti, typically utilizing one or two colors, and may include symbols, letters, abbreviations, or short words to convey the artist's message.

## **Wild Style**

McMahon (2020) defined wild-style graffiti as a form of graffiti that involves the use of highly stylized letters ( as cited in Zoughebi & Kasmi , 2020 ).That is to say, Wild style graffiti is widely recognized for its complexity and deep details, making it one of the most famous forms of graffiti all over the world. Also, its intricate lettering presents a challenge for those who are unfamiliar with it, as it can be hard to read and comprehend.

## **Pieces**

Randal (2014) stated that graffiti term 'piece', short of masterpiece, is used to describe a large, complex, time-consuming and labor-intensive graffiti painting, usually painted by skilled and experienced writer. In other words, Graffiti pieces are large and highly detailed paintings or artwork. They require at least three colors and incorporate color transitions, shadows, and three-dimensional effects. Also, Pieces showcase the artist's creativity and convey meaningful messages through intricate lettering, characters, and backgrounds. Creating a piece demand a large period of time and skill, allowing artists to demonstrate their technical abilities and artistic talent .

## **Significance of Graffiti within the University Setting**

Graffiti in the university setting holds significant cultural, educational, and historical value, it captures the perspectives and ideas of students, reflecting their search for knowledge, freedom, and justice, and serves as a record of the cultural and historical moments of each generation. The writings on university walls constitute a vibrant dialogue between the past, present, and future rather than only acts of vandalism (Halsey & Young, 2006) . In educational institutions, this kind of self-expression is especially significant because it can motivate students struggling academically by fostering their creativity, curiosity, and perseverance. It allows students to express their feelings and identities anonymously, it explores a variety of subjects, reflecting the social concerns and emotions of students. Despite being unlawful in certain universities, graffiti remains a significant cultural and linguistic phenomenon, allowing students to communicate, share information, and establish connections within the university community. Overall, graffiti plays a crucial role in shaping campus culture.

## **Previous Studies of Graffiti**

In exploring the semiotic and thematic elements of graffiti at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou, it is crucial to contextualize this study within the broader landscape of graffiti research. Previous studies have provided valuable insights into the motivations and semantic content of graffiti in educational settings.

One of the earliest studies of graffiti was conducted by Schreer and Strichartz (1997) to analyze 428 pieces of restroom graffiti collected from men's and women's facilities at two campuses in upstate New York. The researchers revealed that men's restrooms contained significantly more insulting (especially anti-gay) and scatological graffiti, while women's restrooms had more political graffiti but fewer romantic inscriptions. The university campus,

with a more diverse student body, exhibited higher levels of racist and political graffiti compared to the smaller college campus, suggesting that restroom graffiti can provide a discreet yet informative window into exploring controversial social issues within educational environments.

Green (2003), in his study “The Writing on the Stall: Gender and Graffiti, analyzed inscriptions collected from males' and females' toilets and study booths. Green’s findings indicated that men’s graffiti focused more on politics and homosexuality, often featuring insults and racist remarks. The overall tone was negative and argumentative. In contrast, women’s graffiti tended to discuss sex, relationships, religion, and philosophy, with a more positive and supportive tone.

In an article entitled 'A Study of Graffiti in Teacher Education', Sad and Kutlu (2009) aimed to understand the content and underlying reasons for graffiti written by prospective teachers. The results showed that graffiti revealed distinct themes based on location and gender. Restroom graffiti often addressed sensitive topics such as sexuality, politics, and religion, with men writing more on these subjects than women. Classroom and lab graffiti focused on themes like belongingness, homesickness, romance, humor, and doodling.

Another study by Farnia (2014), adopted a thematic analysis to explore how students express their opinions and emotions through graffiti. The results revealed several thematic categories, including expressions of love and hatred, politics, religion, poems, class notes, signatures, presence, dates, expressions of complaint or despair, self-statements, and drawings.

Further research conducted by was conducted by Al-Khawaldeh et al., (2017) examined graffiti found in The Hashemite and the Jordanian University spaces such as classrooms, corridors, and bathrooms. They aimed to analyze the content and

communicative aspects of these writings and their connection to societal values. The research revealed that graffiti serves various purposes, including personal expression, social commentary, national identity, religious beliefs, political statements, and discussions of taboo subjects.

In a recent study by Rababah (2020), 130 graffiti works sampled from public spaces within the university campus were analyzed using critical discourse analysis. The researcher categorized graffiti into several types, with results revealing that the most common types of graffiti are personal and emotional, social, national, religious, sports, and academic ones.

## **Semiotics**

### **Semiotics and Semiology**

Semiotics and semiology are terms used to refer to the general science of signs and signification. Semiology derives from the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, while semiotics is often linked with the American philosopher and mathematician Charles Sanders Peirce. Semiotics can be defined as the study of signs and symbols, exploring how they create and communicate meaning. According to Umberto Eco defines semiotics as “concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign” (Eco, 1976, p. 7). Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the founding figures of semiotics, described semiology as "a science which studies the role of signs as a part of social life." In other words, he emphasizes the idea that signs play a fundamental role in human communication and interaction within society. In this context, a sign refers to any form of communication that conveys meaning, including language, gestures, symbols, images, and more. Saussure's approach focused on the connection between the signifier (the physical form of a sign) and the signified (the concept it represents), forming a foundation for understanding the complexity of signs in society.

For Charles Peirce, semiotics was the "formal doctrine of signs," which was closely related to logic. He defined the sign as "something which stands to somebody for something

in some respect or capacity" (Peirce, 1931-1958, 2.228). Peirce's semiotic theory focuses on how signs function in communication, how they convey meaning, and how they are interpreted by individuals. He outlined his theory in his works, particularly in his essay "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs" published in 1898, where he developed a triadic model of signs consisting of three key elements: the sign (representamen), the object being represented, and the interpretant (the meaning or concept that the sign conveys).

## **Social Semiotics**

Social semiotics is a subfield of semiotics that studies human signifying practices and seeks to explain meaning-making as a social process. It focuses on the social elements of meaning and the impact of human signification and interpretation processes on individuals and societies. Introduced by the linguist and semiotician Michael Halliday, social semiotics is grounded in his theory of systemic functional linguistics, which views language as a social semiotic system where linguistic choices are influenced by context and function (Halliday, 1978).

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress expanded the scope of social semiotics beyond language to include various modes of communication, such as visual and multimedia texts (Hodge & Kress, 1988). In *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) emphasized the significance of the visual mode within social semiotics, highlighting the increasing importance of images and visual media in contemporary culture. The visual mode has become a critical area of focus due to its pervasive role in shaping and conveying meaning in today's society.

## **The Concept of Sign**

### **Definitions**

A sign is any physical form that has been imagined or made externally (through some physical medium) to stand for an object, event, feeling, etc., known as a referent, or for a class of similar

(or related) objects, events, feelings, etc., known as a referential domain. In human life, signs serve many functions. They allow people to recognize patterns in things, act as predictive guides or plans for taking actions, serve as exemplars of specific kinds of phenomena, and much more (Sebeok, 2001). This means that a sign is considered anything that can be imagined or created to represent something. Signs can be symbols like a "cross," gestures like a "handshake," or objects like a "pen." They function as tools that help us communicate, understand, and interact with the surrounding world. Sebeok (1994) defines the sign as “any mark, bodily movement, symbol, token, etc., used to indicate and to convey thoughts, information, commands, etc. It is the basis of human thought and communication” (p. 10; as cited in Zoughebi & Kasmi, 2020). In other words, everything can be a sign.

#### ❖ **The Concept of Sign According to Saussure**

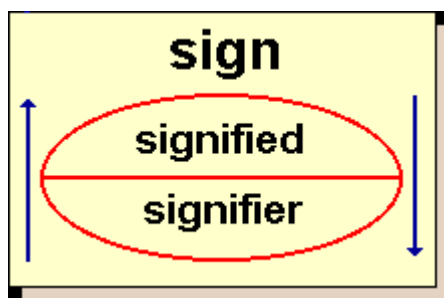
Ferdinand de Saussure is known for introducing the concept of the linguistic sign. Saussure offered a 'dyadic' or two-part model of the sign. He defines the sign as being composed of: a 'signifier' (signifiant) - the form which the sign takes; and the 'signified' (signifié) - the concept it represents (Chandler, 2007). Saussure claimed that the sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified (Saussure, 1983, 67; Saussure, 1974, 67). The relationship between the signifier and the signified is referred to as 'signification,' represented in the Saussurean diagram by arrows. The horizontal line marking the two elements of the sign is referred to as 'the bar' (Chandler, 2007). Moreover, Saussure argued that signs only make sense as part of a formal, generalized, and abstract system. His conception of meaning was purely structural and relational rather than referential: primacy is given to relationships rather than to things. The meaning of signs lies in their systematic relation to each other rather than deriving from any inherent features of signifiers or any reference to material things (Chandler, 2007).

According to Saussure, signs refer primarily to each other. Within the language system,

"everything depends on relations" (Saussure, 1983, 121; Saussure, 1974, 122). No sign makes sense on its own but only in relation to other signs. Both signifier and signified are purely relational entities (Saussure, 1983, 118; Saussure, 1974, 120). In other words, for him, the meaning of signs comes from their relationships with other signs rather than from their individual characteristics or connection to real-world objects.

**Figure 1**

*Saussure's Model of Sign (Chandler, 2007)*



#### ❖ The Concept of Sign According to Peirce

Across the Atlantic, independent work was also in progress as the pragmatist philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Peirce formulated his own model of the sign, of 'semiotic,' and of the taxonomies of signs. In contrast to Saussure's model of the sign in the form of a 'self-contained dyad,' Peirce offered a triadic model involving the following :

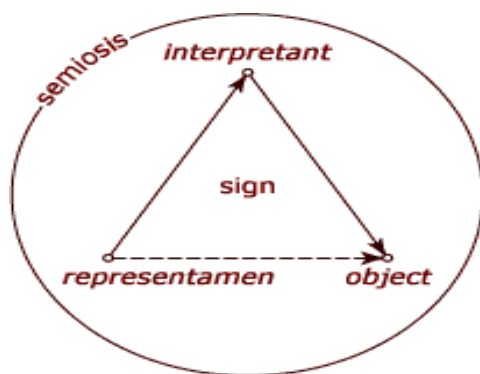
- The Representamen: the form which the sign takes (not necessarily material).
- An Interpretant: not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign.
- An Object: to which the sign refers (Chandler, 2007).

According to Peirce, "A sign... [in the form of a representamen] is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its

object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen" (Peirce, 1931-1958, 2.228). The interaction between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant is referred to by Peirce as 'semiosis'. According to him, a sign is something that represents something else to someone.

**Figure 2**

*Charles Sanders Peirce Triadic Model*



## **Types of Sign**

Peirce (1931) classified signs into three types:

### **Icon**

Peirce declared that an iconic sign represents its object "mainly by its similarity" (Peirce, 1931-1958, para. 299, as cited in Chandler, 2007). A sign is an icon "insofar as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it". He originally termed such modes "likenesses". This means that, for Peirce, an iconic sign represents its object through similarity or resemblance in form or appearance. He added that "every picture (however conventional its method)" is an icon. Icons have qualities that "resemble" those of the objects they represent and "excite analogous sensations in the mind" (Peirce, 1931-1958, 2.299, as cited in Chandler, 2007). In other words, according to Peirce, all pictures, regardless of their conventional nature, are considered icons because they share qualities and evoke similar sensations to the objects they represent.

## **Index**

Indexicality is perhaps the most unfamiliar concept. Peirce offers various criteria for what constitutes an index. An index 'indicates' something: for example, 'a sundial or clock indicates the time of day' (Peirce, 1931-1958, para. 299, as cited in Chandler, 2007). He refers to a 'genuine relation' between the 'sign' and the object which does not depend purely on 'the interpreting mind. The object is 'necessarily existent'. The index is connected to its object 'as a matter of fact' (para. 447). There is 'a real connection' (para. 75). There may be a 'direct physical connection'. An indexical sign is like 'a fragment torn away from the object' (ibid., para. 231). Unlike an icon (the object of which may be fictional) an index stands 'unequivocally for this or that existing thing' (para. 531). Indexical signs 'direct the attention to their objects by blind compulsion' (para. 306). In other words, an index is a sign that indicates something by having a genuine connection or relation to its object, this can be through a direct physical connection or factual association. They are considered as signs that grab attention to focus on a particular object through a compelling and involuntary connection.

## **Symbol**

According to Peirce's semiotic theory, a symbol is a type of sign that refers to an object "by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object" (Peirce, 1931, as cited in Chandler, 2007, para. 249). Peirce also emphasizes that the connection between a symbol and its object is dependent on the "symbol-using animal" or the interpreter, without whom the symbolic connection would not exist (para. 299). He further states that a symbol "is constituted a sign merely or mainly by the fact that it is used and understood as such" (para. 307), and it "would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant" (para. 304). Peirce classifies symbols as "conventional sign[s], or one[s] depending upon habit (acquired or inborn)" (para. 297), and notes that "all words, sentences, books and other conventional signs

are symbols" (para. 292). In summary, Peirce's conception of the symbol emphasizes its reliance on shared conventions, associations, and understandings between the sign and its interpreter in order to convey meaning..

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study draw upon Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory , particularly his triadic model of sign to analyze graffiti as a visual language . Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) introduced the Triadic Model of signs, which consists of three fundamental components: the representamen, the object, and the interpretant .In other words ,it is composed of the sign itself ( representamen ) , the intended object , and the interpreter or interpretant which is the sense made of the sign, Forming a triadic relationship that determines the meaning of signs . This model allows for a systematic examination of the visual and textualelements of the graffiti, the concepts they represent, and the interpretation behind them. By applying this model, the research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which graffiti functions as a sign system, how it is used to convey meaning and create social connections within MMU 's selected departments .

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the literature review chapter encompasses four key sections. Firstly, it delves into the topic of graffiti. Secondly, it discusses semiotics and the concept of sign. Lastly, it establishes the theoretical framework. By integrating these sections, the literature review chapter provides a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge, setting the stage for the subsequent research project.

*Chapter Two*  
*Research Methodology*

## **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology of the current study, which involves conducting a semiotic thematic analysis of graffiti in selected departments at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou. It provides a detailed explanation of the research design, setting, data collection procedures, corpus description, data collection tools, and data analysis methods. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the methodology is specifically crafted to capture the depth and complexity of the graffiti's symbolic and thematic content.

### **1. Procedures Of Data Collection**

#### **Research Design**

The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for this study, as it allows for a nuanced exploration of the symbolic and thematic elements of graffiti. The research design is corpus-based, involving the systematic collection and analysis of graffiti found in various university departments. This approach aligns with the qualitative research paradigm described by Creswell (2014), which emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning that participants ascribe to a social or human problem, rather than the meaning that the researchers bring to the research.

The corpus-based study, as defined by McEnery and Hardie (2012), utilizes a body of texts to analyze patterns, structures, and meanings. This enables the identification of recurrent themes and symbols within the graffiti, providing insights into the cultural and social contexts in which they are created. By collecting data in a natural setting and focusing on the meaning that participants ascribe to the graffiti, this qualitative, corpus-based approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the symbolic and thematic elements of graffiti, which is well-suited for the aims of this study.

## **Description of the Corpus**

The corpus for this study consists of a purposive sample of 90 graffiti pieces selected to ensure a diverse range of themes, styles, and messages. Purposive sampling, as defined by Patton (2002), involves selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study, which is particularly useful in qualitative research seeking a deep understanding of specific phenomena. The sample includes graffiti from different university departments, reflecting a range of academic and cultural contexts, and contains both textual elements, such as phrases, slogans, and single words in various languages, as well as visual components, including drawings, symbols, and abstract designs. This combination of textual and visual elements provides a multi-faceted medium for expression, where the interplay between words and images adds depth to the communicated messages. The selection criteria for the graffiti prioritized factors such as visual impact, thematic content, and representativeness of the overall graffiti culture in the university, and excluded graffiti that were faded, partially erased, or otherwise illegible to ensure the clarity and interpretability of the data.

## **Research Setting**

The research was conducted at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou, a prominent educational institution in Algeria. The selected departments for the study were English, French, Tamazight, Arabic, and Biology located in Tamda. These departments were chosen based on their availability and accessibility, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of graffiti from different academic and cultural contexts within the university. The university environment offers a rich setting for exploring graffiti, as it is a space where diverse ideas, identities, and cultural expressions converge. The graffiti in these departments reflect various social, political, and cultural themes, making it an ideal site for a semiotic thematic analysis.

## **Data Collection Tools**

Data collection relied on two primary tools: a smartphone and a notebook. Each tool played a crucial role in capturing and documenting the graffiti. Data collection involved photographing graffiti using a smartphone and recording contextual notes in a notebook. Photography, as defined by Sontag (1977), is the art, practice, or job of taking and processing photographs. This method allows for the capture of visual and contextual details of the graffiti, which are essential for a thorough analysis. The use of a smartphone for photography ensured the collection of high-quality images that accurately represent the graffiti in their natural setting. The use of smartphone facilitated the data collection process. Alongside each photograph, notes were taken to document the location, and any relevant observations about the graffiti. The notebook allowed for the documentation of qualitative details that could not be captured through photographs alone, providing a richer context for each graffiti piece. These contextual notes were later used to inform the thematic and semiotic analysis.

The selected departments were visited multiple times to capture a comprehensive sample of graffiti. This process allowed for the collection of a diverse range of graffiti, ensuring that the sample reflects the variety of themes and styles present in the university. The fieldwork was conducted over a period of three months.

## **2. Procedures of Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using two complementary approaches: qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis and semiotic analysis according to Peirce's triadic model.

### **Qualitative Content Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is defined by Schreier (2012) as a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data through the process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. This study employs both semantic and latent approaches to

content analysis.

The semantic approach involves analyzing the explicit content of the graffiti. This includes the visible and surface-level meanings of the text and images. By focusing on what is directly expressed, the semantic analysis provides a clear understanding of the overt messages conveyed by the graffiti. This approach helps to identify common themes and motifs that are readily apparent to viewers.

The latent approach, on the other hand, delves into the underlying meanings and implications of the graffiti. It goes beyond the surface content to explore the deeper, often hidden messages and social or cultural significance of the graffiti. This approach is essential for uncovering the symbolic and thematic depth of the graffiti, providing insights into the broader social and cultural contexts in which they were created.

The qualitative content analysis process involves several steps. First, the photographs of the graffiti were reviewed and coded based on their thematic content. Initial codes were generated to capture the main themes and symbols present in the graffiti. These codes were then refined and grouped into broader categories, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns and themes. The analysis was iterative, with multiple rounds of coding and review to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned as '...it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis' (p.78). A further advantage, particularly from the perspective of learning and teaching, is that it is a method rather than a methodology (Braun & Clarke 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013). That is to say, Thematic analysis is the process of identifying and analyzing patterns or themes within qualitative data, providing core skills that can be applied to various types of analysis.

Along with this , Alhojailan (2012) argued that Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data. By using thematic analysis there is the possibility to link the various concepts and opinions of the learners and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situation at different times during the project. In other words, Thematic analysis helps researchers identify connections between concepts and opinions within qualitative data, allowing for comparisons and understanding across different situations and time during the project.

Moreover, Braun and Clarke ( 2012) claimed that TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Also, through focusing on meaning across a dataset, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. For them, identifying unique and idiosyncratic meanings and experiences found only within a single data item is not the focus of TA. This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities. That is , Thematic analysis is a method that systematically identifies and organizes patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset, allowing researchers to understand collective or shared meanings and experiences related to a particular topic. Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is theoretically flexible for identifying, describing, and interpreting patterns (themes) within a data set in great detail. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that this approach makes the analysis more valid because of its accessibility, transparency, and flexibility. In other words, Thematic analysis is a flexible method that allows for detailed identification, description, and interpretation of patterns (themes) within a data set, enhancing validity through its accessibility, transparency, and adaptability.

In order to maintain necessary rigor in the analysis process, a study can adopt the six-

phase process as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) . The phases are as follows:

### ***Phase One: Familiarization with the Data***

Common to all forms of qualitative analysis, this phase involves immersing yourself in the data by reading and re-reading textual data (e.g., transcripts of interviews, responses to qualitative surveys), and listening to audio-recordings or watching video data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). At this stage, it is useful to make notes and jot down early impressions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). That is to say , researchers immerse themselves in the data by thoroughly reviewing textual, audio, or video data, making notes and early impressions to gain a deep understanding of the content.

### ***Phase 2: Generating initial codes***

In this phase we start to organize our data in a meaningful and systematic way. Coding reduces lots of data into small chunks of meaning. There are different ways to code and the method will be determined by your perspective and research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Along with this , Braun & Clarke (2012) claim that Codes are the building blocks of analysis. That is to say , researchers organize the data by identifying meaningful patterns and systematically reducing large amounts of data into smaller units of meaning or codes, which serve as the building blocks for analysis.

### ***Phase 3: Searching for themes***

In this phase, your analysis starts to take shape as you shift from codes to themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). A theme “captures something important about the data about the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) That is to say, researchers begin to shape their analysis by identifying and categorizing patterns of meaningful responses or meanings within the data in relation to the research question .

#### ***Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes***

This phase involves a recursive process whereby the developing themes are reviewed in relation to the coded data and entire dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Along with this, during this phase we review, modify and develop the preliminary themes that we identified in Step 3. Do they make sense? At this point it is useful to gather together all the data that is relevant to each theme (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In other words, researchers review and refine themes by examining how they relate to the coded data and gather relevant data for each theme.

#### ***Phase 5: Defining and naming themes***

This is the final refinement of the themes and the aim is to ‘... Identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about.’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92) (As mentioned by Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). That is, researchers aim to identify the central essence of each theme, capturing its core meaning within the data.

#### ***Phase 6: Producing the report***

Usually the end-point of research is some kind of report, often a journal article or dissertation (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In other words, researchers conclude with the creation of a report, such as a journal article or dissertation, which presents the study's findings and conclusions.

#### **Semiotic Analysis According to Peirce's Triadic Model :**

Semiotic analysis, as defined by Chandler (2007), is the study of signs and symbols as significant components of communication. This study uses Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of the sign, which includes three components: the representamen, the object, and the interpretant.

- Representamen : The representamen is the physical form of the sign, such as the

images, text, and symbols found in the graffiti. This component focuses on the visual and textual elements that constitute the graffiti.

- **Object:** The object refers to the subject matter or concept that the graffiti represents. This could be a specific idea, theme, or issue that the graffiti addresses or comments on.

- **The interpretant:** is the meaning or interpretation derived from the sign. It involves the viewer's understanding and interpretation of the graffiti, influenced by their cultural, social, and personal context.

Peirce's triadic model provides a structured framework for decoding the graffiti, allowing for a detailed analysis of how signs function and convey meaning. By examining the relationships between the representamen, object, and interpretant, this analysis uncovers the layers of meaning embedded in the graffiti.

The semiotic analysis process involved a close examination of each graffiti piece, identifying the representamen (visual and textual elements), the object (thematic content), and the interpretant (potential meanings). This analysis was contextualized within the broader cultural and social environment of the university, considering factors such as the intended audience, cultural references, and socio-political context.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research design of the present study, detailing the methodology used to conduct a semiotic thematic analysis of graffiti in selected departments at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou. It provided a comprehensive explanation of the research design, setting, data collection procedures, corpus description, data collection tools, and data analysis methods. The qualitative approach was specifically opted for to capture the depth and complexity of the graffiti's symbolic and thematic content, ensuring a thorough and nuanced exploration of the graffiti within its cultural and social context.



## *Chapter Three*

### *Presentation of the Findings*

## Introduction

This empirical chapter is devoted to the analysis of the gathered data related to students' graffiti collected from Mouloud Mammeri University. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section introduces the corpus of the study, and the second section presents the findings derived from analyzing 90 graffiti pieces collected from various departments at Mouloud Mammeri University. It provides a detailed analysis of 37 purposefully selected instances using Peirce's triadic model, namely the representamen and the object.

### Presentation of the Corpus of the Study

#### The Recurrent Themes in the Students' Graffiti

**Table 1**

*The Recurrent Themes of Graffiti*

Theme	Personal and Emotional	Culture and Identity	National Figures	Religion	Politics	Biology	Class notes	Education	Quotes	Music and lyrics
Number of graffiti	24	13	10	10	7	5	8	3	6	4

Table 1 highlights ten main themes that are repeatedly discussed in the graffiti under study, with a total of 90 instances. The theme "Personal and Emotional" is the most frequently depicted, appearing 24 times. It is followed by "Culture and Identity," which appears 13 times. Both "National Figures" and "Religion" are represented equally, each with a frequency of 10. "Politics" is noted 7 times, while "Biology" appears 5 times. "Class Notes" also appears 7 times. "Education" is the least represented theme, with only 3 instances, suggesting it as a less common subject in graffiti. Lastly, "Quotes" are depicted 6 times, while "Music and Lyrics" also feature 3 times, highlighting the influence of literary and musical elements in graffiti.

## The Languages Used in the Graffiti

**Table 2**

*The Frequency of Languages Used in the Graffiti*

languages used in graffiti	English language	Frensh language	Arabic language	Berber language	Spanish language
Number of graffiti	30	29	12	11	2

Table 2 presents the frequency of different languages used in the graffiti analyzed in this research. As shown, five languages are used to express the different graffiti in this research. "English" is the dominant language, appearing in 30 instances. It is followed by "French," with a frequency of 29. Both "Arabic" and "Berber" are almost equally represented. Lastly, the "Spanish" language is used in 2 instances.

## Presentation of the Thematic and Semiotic Analysis of the Graffiti

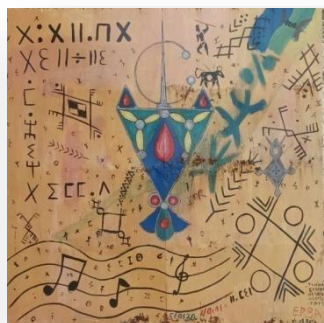
Graffiti can be categorized depending on the meaning it represents. According to the corpus we have collected, we can classify them into the following ten themes:

### Culture and Identity

#### The representamen and the Object

#### Figure 3

*Graffiti N°1*



The representamen in graffiti 1 consists of various symbols, shapes, and letters in vibrant colors. The objects it refers to include the central design that represents a colorful

Berber jewel with blue, green, yellow, and red, the Amazigh flag with the same colors, a drawing of a primitive man and a bull, words written in Tifinagh, musical notes, and other Berber symbols. Underneath, the names of graffiti artists are also present.

**Figure 4**

*Graffiti N°2*



The representamen in Figure 2 is a black symbol made of vertical line with white diamond shapes and two curved horizontal lines, all on a white background. The object it refers to is the Amazigh (Berber) symbol, specifically the letter "ⵢ" (Yaz) from the Tifinagh Alphabet. This symbol represents the identity and heritage of the Amazigh people, and it signifies the concept of a free man.

**Figure 5**

*Graffiti N°3*



**Figure 6**

*Graffiti N°4*



The representamen in these two images depicts two distinct Tamazight texts: "Idles nney danagi" and "D azar-is ara nedfar" which means "our culture is a witness, we follow its roots". The object consists of two sentences written in the Tamazight language in black color,

situated between two Berber symbols, in black and another in red. The sentence “our culture is a witness, we follow its roots“ is a powerful expression written in Tamazight language. The sentence is divided into two parts, the first part “ our culture is a witness “ suggests that culture is a reflection of the history of the Amazigh people . The second part “We follow its roots” suggests that the Amazigh people are committed to preserve their cultural heritage. The use of the word “roots” implies that the culture is deeply rooted in the history and traditions of the Amazigh people. The sentence reflects the importance of preserving and celebrating cultural heritage which is shown indirectly in the sentence by writing it using the Tamazight language.

### **Figure 7**

*Graffiti N°5*



The representamen in this image (Figure 5) is a text that states : " UNE CULTURE N'EST PAS UN PATRIMOINE NI UN HÉRITAGE. UNE CULTURE C'EST QUELQUE CHOSE QUE L'ON VIT ET C'EST QUELQUE CHOSE QUE L'ON FAIT VIVRE ", that is to say , “ culture is not a heritage or a patrimony, it is something we live and make live”;. While the object is the text written in French language using black and red colors. The sentence in figure 5 states that: “culture is not a heritage or a patrimony, it is something we live and make live”;in general this highlights the importance of culture as a living and dynamic element Greetedby our ancestors, and we should make it live by sharing it with others .

## National Figures

The graffiti artworks depict further portraits of prominent Algerian figures from various fields including literature, education , history and music.

### The representamen and the Object

#### Figure 8

*Graffiti N°6*



The representament graffiti 6 refers to a drawing in black and white colors. Whereas the object is graffiti artwork depicting Matoub Lounes's face.

#### Figure 9

*Graffiti N°7*



The representament in Figure 7 is a drawing of a woman in black color painted on white wall , also there is a text that says : " Fađma Nsumer 1830-1863". While the object represented is Fatma N'soumer a historical figure and brave woman with a traditional dress holding a weapon in the midst of a battle in Djurdjura mountain. It also includes her years of birth and death and the name of the artist . Fadhma N'Soumer fought against the French conquest of Algeria in the mid 19<sup>th</sup>c. She led several battles and conducted multiple engagement against

the French army , until her capture in 1857 . She was named by the French “The Joan of Arc of the Djurdjura ”.

**Figure 10**

*Graffiti N°8*



The representamen in Figure 8 is a black and white portrait of a man with glasses ,with a text that identifies him as : " Mouloud Feraoun 1913-1962".The object is Mouloud feraoun an Algerian writer and educator who lived from 1913 To 1962 , along with this the names of graffiti artists . Faraoun’s works provide profound insight into the Kabyle society such as « Le fils du pauvre » and « La terre et le sang » which portray the rural kabyle life and explore the themes of poverty education and the impact of colonialism on Algerian society.

**Figure 11**

*Graffiti N°9*



The representamen in this context Figure 9 is the image painted on the wall, featuring a stylized portrait of a man along with a text " Kateb Yacine " and years "1929-1989". The object represented is Kateb Yacine a very famous and prominent Algerian novelist and poet

lived from 1929 to 1989. His works often explored themes of identity, culture and politics. He used the theatre stage as a platform for political and social critique.

### **Figure 12**

*Graffiti N° 10*



The representamen in this image is a portrait of a person, along with a text that identifies him as : " Said Boulifa 1863 -1931 " and" Homme de lettre Kabyle" , which means in English" A man of kabyle literature " .The object is the person named Said Boulifa who was born in 1863 and died in 1931. He made significant contribution to the Berber language and culture.

### **Politics**

#### **The representamen and the Object**

### **Figure 13**

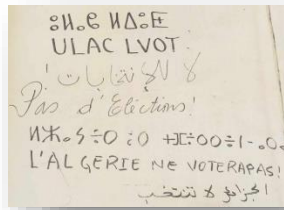
*Graffiti N°11*



The representamen in Figure 11 is the handwritten text " politique" or "politics" in English shown in the image. While The object being represented is the word " politique" written in French language.

## Figure 14

### Graffiti N°12



The representamen in Figure 12 is the text : Ulac Lvot , ال لا لانتخابات , Pas d'élection, L'Algerie ne votera pas, الجزائر ال لا تلتخب , which means in English : No elections , Algeria will not vote .

The object is A handwritten text on the wall written in three languages: Berber , French and Arabic . .

## Figure 15

### Graffiti N°13



In Graffiti 13, the representamen consists of the visual elements - the three stylized monkey figures and the text "REVOLTE ARTS" written below them. The object depicts the 3 monkeys figures.

## Figure 16

### Graffiti N°14



The representation is the visual image of a man including a text : " Mouloud Mammeri 1917-1989 ", "Ecrivain , anthropologue , et linguiste" and " Nul ne peut arrêter un peuple sur le chemin de son destin "which means No one can stop a population on their path to their destiny . The object of this image depicts Mouloud Mammeri an Algerian writer , anthropologist and linguists . Along with the quote attributed to him.

## Figure 17

### Graffiti N°15



The representation in this image consists of a bound hand holding a flag with blue green yellow and red colors on the right side with the text : Le 20 avril c'est nous or April 20th it's us" . While on the left side there is a hand making a fist breaking out of chains and shackles along with a text that states : La liberté pilier de notre identité Berber, that is to say , "Freedom is the pillar of our Berber identity", . The object of this image includes the Amazigh flag held by the bound hand accompanied by French text referencing the Berber Spring.

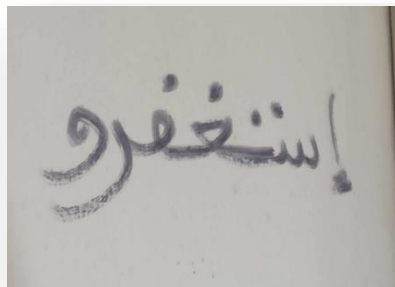
## Religion

### The representamen and the Object

#### Figure 18

##### *Graffiti N°16*

The representamen is the word "استغفرو" or " seek forgiveness ". The object is the word written in Arabic language in black on a white wall.



#### Figure 19

##### *Graffiti N°17*

The representamen is the word " الصلاة عماد الدين " that is to say , " prayer is the pillar of the religion " . The object is the Arabic expression written in black on a white wall.



## Figure 20

### *Graffiti N°18*



The representation is the sentence " الصدقة باب من ابواب الجنة " or in English " Charity is a gate to paradise ". The object is the Arabic expression written in black on a white wall.

## Figure 21

### *Graffiti N°19*



The representation is the sentence " عسى أن نكرهوا شيئاً وهو خير لكم " or " you may may dislike something, and it is good for you ". The object is the Arabic expression written in black on a white wall.

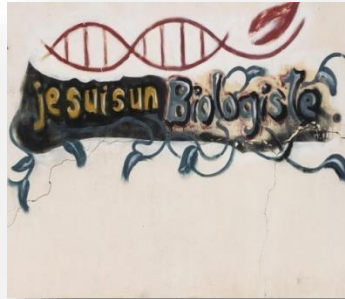
## **Biology**

Graffiti about biology are related to the drawings or writings about living organisms, their structure, functions and problem faced.

## The representamen and the Object

**Figure 22**

*Graffiti N°20*



The representamen is graffiti artwork depicting stylized text " je suis un biologiste" or " I am a biologist" .The object is a French phrase written in French language using blue and yellow colors , along with a red drawing of a DNA double helix and blue tree leaves.

**Figure 23**

*Graffiti N°21*



Representamen: The visual elements of the painting, including the trees, clouds, rocks, and the text "Foresterie" or " forestry" . Object: The actual forested landscape or environment that this artwork is representing or depicting.

## Figure 24

### *Graffiti N°22*



Representamen: The visual elements of the painting, including the stylized globe, the contrasting natural and industrial imagery, the text "Eco x Eco", and the artist's signature.

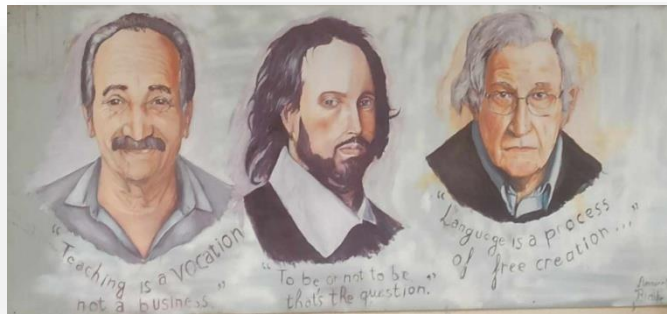
Object: The real-world environmental issues and tensions between ecology and economy that the artwork is representing or symbolizing.

## Education

### The Representamen and the Object

## Figure 25

### *Graffiti N°23*

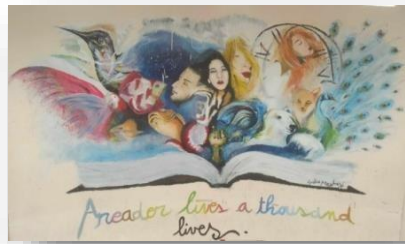


Representamen: The visual elements of the painting, including the three portraits, the quotes or statements associated with each individual, and the artistic style and composition. Object:

The real-world individuals and their ideas, perspectives, or philosophies that are being represented in the artwork.

**Figure 26**

*Graffiti N°24*



The representation is the visual image of an open book with various characters and elements emerging from it, accompanied by a colorful text: 'a reader lives a thousand lives', and the artist's signature. The object in this context is the book and diverse characters including human faces and animals.

**Figure 27**

*Graffiti N°25*



The representation in this mural includes an open book with pages turning into flying birds, bookshelves on each side, and the words "NEVER STOP READING" in bold letters. The object is the book, birds, and bookshelves.

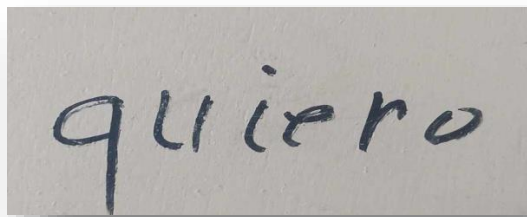
## Personnal and Emotional

### The Representamen and the Object

Graffiti is mainly considered as a mean of personal expression. That is to say, artists and students use university walls and spaces to convey intimate thoughts , emotion ,experiences , and also reporting authors' quotations serving as a moral.

#### Figure 28

*Graffiti N°26*



The representamen is the word: " Quiero" or" i want". The object is the Spanish word written in black in a white wall. This tag has a personal meaning."Quierro" means literally "I want ", it conveys a sense of desire of the artist to do something not precise

#### Figure 29

*Graffiti N°27*



The representamen is the text : Ghiles and Hayet with a symbol between them. The object consists of persons' names with heart between them.

The graffiti is a tag written using Latin alphabet , representing a love declaration between two individuals, a man named "Ghilas" and a woman named "Hayat". The heart symbol placed

between their names suggests this is a public expression of their affection and emotional connection.

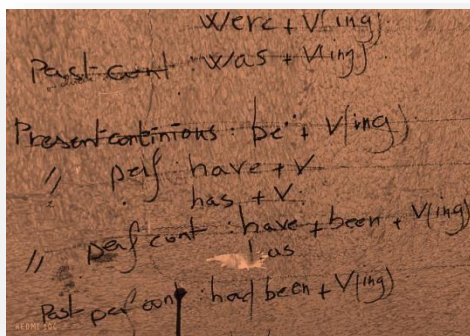
### Class Notes

Mouloud Mammeri university's students tend to write academic notes on the walls.

### The Representamen and the Object

Figure 30

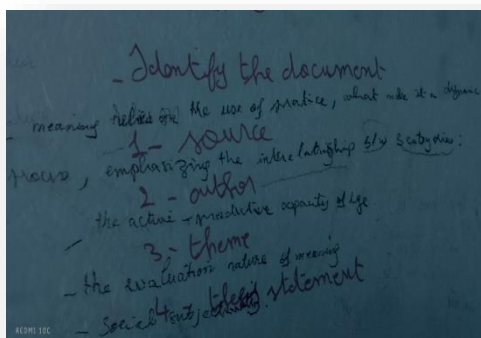
Graffiti N°28



The representamen in this image is a text written in English language. The object consists of academic notes, mainly grammar rules written in black on the wall.

Figure 31

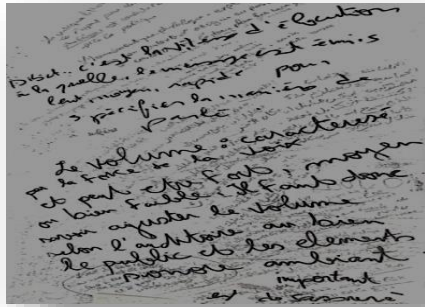
Graffiti N°29



The representamen in this graffiti reads a text written in English. The object depicts a class notes, the titles are written in red and the content is written in black.

**Figure 32**

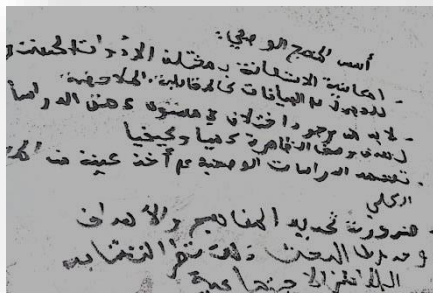
*Graffiti N°30*



The representamen depicts a long text written in French language ,while the object shows a course notes written in black in a white wall .

**Figure 33**

*Graffiti N°31*

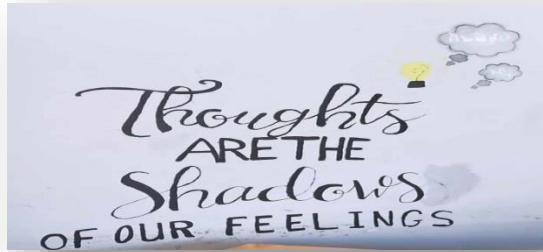


[The representamen is a long text written in Arabic. The object advocates lecture notes written in black in white background.

## Quotes

### Figure 34

*Graffiti N°32*



The representamen is the text: Thoughts are the shadows of our feelings , along with drawings . The object consists of the stylized text written in English language in black color with two drawings, a yellow lamp and clouds. This figure is considered as a philosophical expression proposed by Frederick Nietzsche, written in English language. He was a famous German philosopher, living from 1844 to 1900. He was well known for his original ideas and writings regarding various philosophical domains.

### Figure 35

*Graffiti N°33*

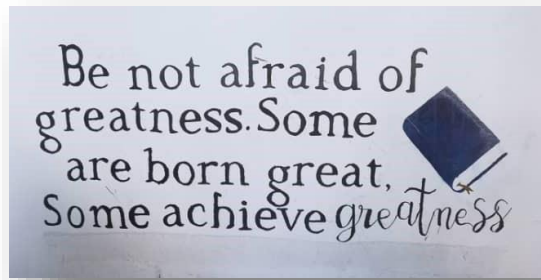


The representamen is the text that reads: Be loved Be admired Be necessary Be somebody ,with a star icon. Object is the black text written on a white background next to text there is a small golden star icon. This figure consists of the English quotation written by Simone de

Beauvoir in her autobiographical work "Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter" published in 1958. She was a very famous philosopher, feminist and author, living from 1908 to 1986 in Paris.

### Figure 36

*Graffiti N°34*

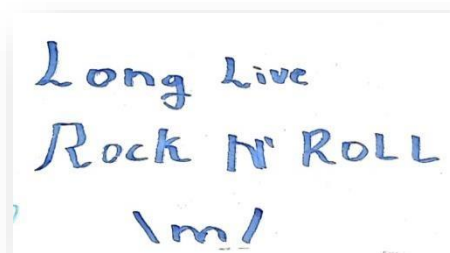


The representamen is the text: « Be not afraid of greatness with. Some are born great, some achieve greatness » with a drawing. Object is a quotation written in a stylized way with black color, along with a drawing of a blue book in a white background.

### Music and lyrics

### Figure 37

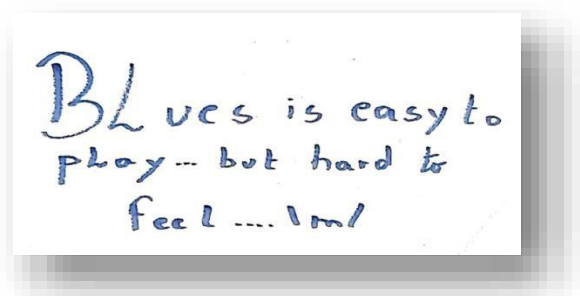
*Graffiti N°35*



The representamen in this image is a text Long Live Rock N' Roll with a sign. The object consists of a text written in English language using blue color in a white wall with a rock hand sign.

### Figure 38

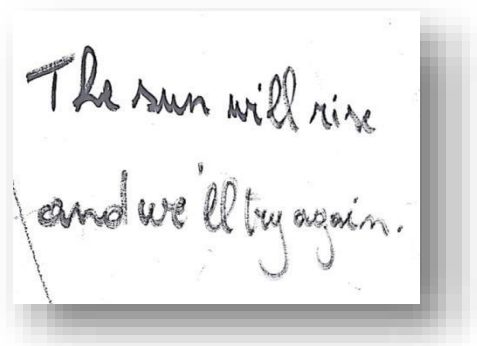
*Graffiti N°36*



The representamen in this image is a text Blue is easy to play but hard to feel alongside a sign. The object consists of a text written in English language using black color in a white background with a rock hand sign.

### Figure 39

*Graffiti N° 37*



The representamen in this image is a text the sun will rise and we'll try again. The object consists of a text written in English language using black color in a white wall.

### Conclusion

This chapter has first presented the results of the study: the different themes and languages used in the students' graffiti. The analysis was guided by Peirce's triadic model, focusing on the representamen and the object. The discussion and interpretations of these findings will be explored in the following chapter.



## *Chapter Four*

### *Discussion of the Findings*

## **Introduction**

The present chapter aims to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter which were obtained after the analysis of the students' graffiti. The discussion then follows the theoretical framework inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic framework (1931). Therefore, the chapter will attempt to provide answers to the research questions asked in the general Introduction. The first section deals with the languages used to write and draw graffiti and the reasons why the UMMTO students opted for these languages. The second and final section discusses the findings related to the various themes deduced from the corpus.

## **Discussion of the Findings Related to the Languages**

The analysis of the languages used in graffiti within Mouloud Mammeri University reveals intriguing insights into the linguistic, historical, and social dimensions of student expression. Unexpectedly, English is the most frequently used language in the graffiti and this prevalence can be attributed to several factors. English is currently the language of the globe and the language that is most used all over the world. Its dominance in graffiti may reflect the students' desire to connect with global trends and express themselves in a language that has wide international reach. Moreover, English is increasingly becoming the medium of instruction in higher education in Algeria, especially in scientific and technical disciplines. The use of English in graffiti may indicate the students' familiarity and comfort with the language, as well as its perceived prestige. It is worth mentioning that the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune announced that English will be taught as a compulsory school subject alongside Arabic, French and Tamazight (optional) by the school year 2022-2023 from primary school instead of middle school for the first time in the country's history. Therefore, English is becoming the most popular and prestigious foreign language in Algeria, particularly in the past six years, which explains why it is thought of as being the dominant language in graffiti. These basic findings confirm Benbarah's (2013) claim that "English seems to emerge as

another valuable linguistic option perverting the long-established belief that French is the only window to the world, to ‘modernity’, and to science and technology” (p:124).

The considerable presence of the French language can be traced back to its colonial history. French is still a common language in Algeria, used in education, administration, and media. Simply put, French remains a significant part of Algeria’s linguistic landscape due to its colonial past. Many students grow up bilingual in Arabic and French, and French is still widely used in various fields. Its use in graffiti indicates its continued relevance and influence in Algerian society.

The use of Arabic in graffiti signifies a connection to the national and first official language of the country. Arabic is the official language of Algeria and is deeply rooted in the country's history and religion. The presence of Berber in graffiti is particularly noteworthy. It points to the cultural revival and political movements advocating for Kabyle recognition and rights. Berber, or Tamazight, is an indigenous language spoken by the Berber people, and its inclusion in graffiti highlights the ongoing efforts to preserve and promote it. However, compared to English and French, the use of Berber is notably minimal, which is particularly striking given that the university is located in the Kabyle region, known for its Berber-speaking population. The limited presence of Arabic and Berber compared to the two foreign languages in graffiti may suggest that students prefer other languages for more informal or rebellious forms of expression.

The minimal use of Spanish may reflect its limited influence and presence in the Algerian educational and cultural spheres compared to other languages. So, the instances where Spanish appears could be attributed to specific student interests or connections, such as personal experiences, cultural affinities, or academic studies related to the Spanish-speaking world.

## **Discussion of the Findings Related to the Themes**

### **Culture and Identity**

The Berber (Amazigh) students use graffiti as a powerful means to assert their cultural identity. The two graffiti pieces including symbols and imagery that are significant to Berber culture, such as :The Berber jewel, Amazigh flag, a drawing of a primitive man and abull, words written in Tifinagh script, musical notes, and other Berber symbols, The YAZ symbol represents “freedom” or “free man «which is the meaning of the word Amazigh itself .These vibrant and symbolic artworks collectively serve as a way for the students to express their cultural identity and personal experiences shaped by their Berber background. The use of the Amazigh flag and Tifinagh script in the graffiti is particularly significant, as it represents the Berber struggle for recognition and rights within the broader Algerian context. After Algeria's independence in 1962, the Arabization policy led to the marginalization and suppression of Berber language and culture, prompting Berber communities to assert their identity through various means, including art and graffiti. By using the walls of the university, the Berber students are "marking their territory" , making their voice heard, and asserting their distinct cultural heritage .

Graffiti 3, 4 and 5 are a way of encouraging others to engage with and contribute to their culture rather than simply preserving it as a heritage. The sentence is written by a student using in French language which is a complex issue, in the Berber society, on the one hand, French is a language that was imposed during the colonial period, and it became the dominant language. This led many Berber to become bilingual or even trilingual, this was due to the fact that French was seen as the language of power and education . On the other hand, the student's use of French is also a way of reclaiming and reappropriating the language in order to express their own Berber cultural values and beliefs. In this sense, the student's use of French can be seen as a form of cultural resistance. Highlighting the complexity of language and

Identity, language is not just a tool for communication, but it is also a way of expressing different identities.

Matoub Lounes a Berber Kabyle musician and poet, is a key figure in promoting Berber culture through his music and art ; he is considered as a Symbol of Berber resistance and identity . His songs covered wide variety of subjects, including the Berber cause, democracy, freedom, religion, love, history and human rights. He is recognized as the great figure of Kabyle song throughout the Amazigh community. Unfortunately, Matoub Lounes was assassinated on June 25, 1998, in the road to his region in Tizi-Ouzou. His death turned him into martyr for the Berber cause. His image was draw in Mouloud Maameri University to pay homage to his contributions to Berber culture and identity. And as a way for the artist to contribute to cultural revival movement to reclaim the cultural heritage and assert the Berber identity. These expressions reinforce collective cultural identity and heritage, as observed by Farnia (2014) in her study on Iranian graffiti, which often included cultural and nationalistic elements.

### **National Figures**

The students depicted several prominent Algerian Berber figures known for their contribution to this language. By featuring Fatma N'Soumer in the graffiti the artist is paying homage to her contributions to the Kabyle people's struggle for independence highlighting the importance of celebrating Kabyle women's role during the colonial period. Said Boulifa authored foundational texts such as "principes de grammaire Kabyle" (principles of Kabyle grammar). He documented oral literature poems and folklore to preserve Berber traditions. He promoted the use of Berber language in schools and emphasized the importance of including the Kabyle culture in the curriculum.

The graffiti figures represent the collective efforts to maintain their cultural heritage, resist external influences. The graffiti artist represent the struggles faced by the Berber people for cultural recognition and preservation over time, from armed resistance to literary and intellectual activism, this graffiti serves as a powerful educational tool, it introduces students to important Berber figures and the history of Berber activism, making the history accessible and memorable ( paying homage to their legacy).

### **Politics**

The handwritten text “politique” shown in the image n°11 represents the concept of politics, which is a significant theme in the Algerian and Amazigh context. The second tag talking about elections, suggesting that the student is making a connection between the concept of politics and the idea of no election. Algeria has a long history of political instability, criticized as being undemocratic or lacking transparency. The graffiti tags written in the university setting can be seen as a form of political protest by the Amazigh students. The phrases “Ulac Ivot” (no vote), “اللا لال لال اباب” (No to elections), are clear rejections to election. And the sentence written in French “L’Algerie ne votera pas” is a powerful expression of the unity of the Algerian people in their rejection of the political system “Hirak” and their demand for independence. They are asserting their rights to be heard and their refusal to participate in a political system that they see as illegitimate and unrepresentative of their interests. The three monkeys are a well-known symbol that depicts the proverbial principle of “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” in this contest they could be interpreted as representing the refusal to the political system. The text “Revolte” means revolt or rebellion in French, while “arts” suggests the use of artistic expressions . The text as a whole suggests to the Algerian and Amazigh people to use their artistic expressions as a means of resistance and revolt. The artist is aiming to inspire critical thinking, activism and creative resistance among the student population. as it is a powerful call to action and a declaration that the Amazigh and

Algerian people will no longer be silenced or ignored.

The two graffiti images depict the Berber Spring, a significant event in the struggle for Berber rights and recognition in Algeria. The first image references the Berber Spring, with a bound hand holding the Amazigh flag and text stating "April 20th it's us," symbolizing the Berber people's fight for liberation and freedom. The second image features Mouloud Mammeri, an influential Algerian writer, anthropologist, and linguist whose work focused on Berber culture and the struggles under French colonial rule. The events of the Berber Spring began when the Algerian government banned Mammeri's conference on ancient Berber poetry, leading to protests by students and intellectuals demanding recognition of Berber culture and identity. Despite the violent crackdown by authorities, the Berber movement persisted, culminating in the recognition of the Berber language as an official language in Algeria in 2016. The graffiti serves as a way to honor the sacrifices of those who fought for Berber rights and inspire new generations, supporting the idea that graffiti can be used as a form of political dissent and activism (Al-khawaldeh et al., 2017).

## **Religion**

The Berber students at Mouloud Mammeri University have faced challenges in freely expressing their cultural identity due to past suppression. However, they have found a way to represent their identity through the use of graffiti as being a Muslim community. As a result, they have incorporated Arabic and Quranic texts into graffiti as a means of reflecting both their Islamic faith and Berber identity. These acts show that even if they are Berber, most

of them work to preserve the Islamic religion for being a unified community .The four tags share the same goal which is approaching god and preserving Islamic faith and practice . The graffiti encourages the viewers to actively seek forgiveness from Allah and acknowledge their mistakes and emphasizes the importance of prioritizing prayers and maintain a regular practice of prayers before anything else , in order to be closer to god. Further graffiti encourage and highlight the importance of giving charity to persons in need to gain the blessings and god satisfaction, in other words, gaining a place in paradise. Also, graffiti convey the idea that sometimes the undesirable things can be a good decision for changing , because no one knows god's plans . Together these graffiti show how Islam encourages and teaches individuals to be kind, generous , trusting god and preserving prayers to get the blessings of God. The presence of religious graffiti aligns with Farnia's (2014) and Al-khawaldeh et al. (2017) observation of religious sentiments being a common theme in university graffiti in Iran and Jordan.

### **Biology**

Mouloud Mammeri University is a vast institution incorporating various scientific fields, including the field of biology. Students studying this scientific field try to express their connection to it using graffiti representing various actions. Figure N°22 is an artistic work composed of two parts. The first part is related to the stylized text "I am a biologist" written in French. The artist chose the French language to reach a wider audience, as it is widely used in this scientific field and the second language of the country. Besides, the artist used it as a means to express their identity and passion for the field of biology, which is the scientific study of nature and living organisms from insects to animals and plants. Additionally, the artist makes use of a red DNA double helix and natural organisms like leaves to captivate the viewer's attention, showing the dominant themes of biology. Moreover, the artist used vibrant natural colors such as red, green, and yellow to metaphorically represent that biology is the science of nature. Figure N°23 is also made of two parts, a painting of a forest or a forestry landscape

using colors like blue and green to depict a natural place. Furthermore, the artist wrote the word "Forestry" in French using red and yellow, which represents fire. The artist has created this graffiti to raise the viewer's awareness about the danger of forest fires, encouraging individuals to take action to protect and preserve these vital natural environments from potential damage. Lastly, in Figure N°24, the focus of the first part is on the text "Eco x Eco." It refers to the direct tensions that exist between economy and ecology. Economy refers to the system of production and distribution of goods, such as factories producing cars, shoes, and chemical products. Ecology, on the other hand, is the scientific study of the relationship between living organisms and their surrounding environment. Since technological developments, different tensions have emerged between these two concerns. As Figure N°22 shows, the living organisms like humans, animals, and the entire Earth suffer from economic development. The aim of the artist through this artwork is to sensitize the viewers to the danger of economic advancement towards ecological systems.

### **Education**

Mouloud Mammeri University offers students the chance to be engaged in a variety of foreign language fields, including the Department of English Language and Literature being one of the most popular choices. This department provides comprehensive programs that allow students to study the English language deeply, covering modules such as literature, linguistics, civilization, and grammar of English countries. The English department is guided by highly qualified professors and doctors who teach the language with great passion and expertise, helping students to be more cultivated in the field. Figure n°25 is composed of three important figures representing the English department.

The first figure represents Noam Chomsky, a very famous American philosopher, linguist, and political activist. He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1928. He is well known as the father of modern linguistics. He made many contributions to the field of

linguistics, as he proposed the theory of generative grammar. That is to say, human beings are born with an innate universal grammar or capacity to learn any language at a young age. As mentioned in this graffiti, he views language as a process of free creation. In other words, according to him, language is a dynamic process of free expression and creativity, instead of just memorizing rules and phrases. The ability of humans to create and produce new meanings, phrases, and sentences in a unique way is the main character of human language.

the second figure depicts William Shakespeare, an English poet, playwright, and dramatic actor. He lived from 1564 to 1616 and was considered one of the greatest and most influential writers in the English language and literature. He is often known as England's national poet or the "Bard of Avon," referring to his high mastery of poetry and dramatic skills and to his birth country, Stratford-upon-Avon. One of his famous works is the play "Hamlet," and this graffiti consists of one of the most famous passages in this play, which is "To be, or not to be, that is the question." As Hamlet is presented as a depressive person, he faced a struggle with his mind. He tried to make a decision whether it is better to continue living ("to be") or to make an end to his life ("not to be").

Lastly, there is the figure of Mr. Hami, one of the brilliant teachers in the Department of English. He teaches various modules such as grammar and ELT. One of his most famous sayings, as mentioned, is "Teaching is a vocation, not a business." According to him, teaching is not only a job to gain a high salary, but a passion where the primary purpose is to educate and empower students to gain sufficient knowledge to build a new, educated, and cultivated generation. The main aims of the artist drawing this graffiti are to captivate and cultivate students about the most prominent figures in literature and linguistics, along with the most famous professor who contributes to the development of the English

Department, and to make them curious to know and search for each of them and their famous quotations.

Reading is one of the most appreciated action of scholars, students, lovers of literature and civilization. It allows readers to gain knowledge and access to a wide variety of academic concepts, works and information related to various themes. Only through opening a book , readers have a large opportunity to develop their reading and writing capacities , as they are engaged in daily reading practices . Figure n 24 is composed of two parts. The first part is the text written in English " a readers lives thousands years ". This expression depicts the idea of the strong power that can result through reading narrative, storytelling and more. A person reading books can move from one emotion to another because of the variety and the vast choice of books. The second part as it is viewed in this artwork , there is different characters including humans , animal and birds emerging from an opened book .That is to say , the written words is full of imagination and experiences that can impact positively the understanding of the reader's external world . Along with this, Figure n 27 share the same concepts . It consists of a text "Never stop reading" written in English, it directly influences the viewers towards reading and learning to be always cultivated. Along with this, there is a drawing of an open book with flying papers that can be interpreted as the vast amount of knowledge and information emerging from the book .The aim of the artist drawing these artworks is to motivate and encourage the viewerstoward reading books, challenging them to read as much possible they can to be cultivated.

### **Personal and Emotional Expressions**

The viewers can make a lot of propositions in their mind. They may understand that the artist want to change something in himself such as a negative habit or something not appreciated .Also , they may interpret it as he wants to travel and change the country seeking for better education or living conditions, as it is the case of MMU 's students . Furthermore, it

may be the idea that the writer wants to finish his study and start his professional life. The aim of the artist through this graffiti is to express his personal desire and feeling toward something, making the audiences engaged in diverse interpretation and understanding. This type of graffiti is a common way for students at MMU to memorialize their personal relationships and convey their personal feelings towards their beloved. The aim of this tag is mainly to memorize their relationship and can be a declaration of personal and emotional feelings. These personal statements align with Sad and Kutlu's (2009) findings, which highlight the role of graffiti in articulating personal identity and emotions.

### **Class Notes**

Students tend to write grammar rules, definitions, and sometimes entire lessons on several classroom walls for one same reason which is usually considered as a negative temptation of cheating, but if we dive deeply into this concept, we find that students commit these actions due to various causes mainly the pressure coming from the very long curriculum taught in a tiny period of time, the difficulty degree of some modules and lessons, the students' laziness of studying every single module. In addition, many students have issues in maintaining information in their long term memory and in understanding lessons correctly. Along with this, sometimes, the syllabus is not adequately coordinated with the students' level. Moreover, certain modules require only memorizing, that is why students find it very difficult to keep every detail in their heads especially history related data. Academically, academic notes that students write on the walls are considered a form of cheating which is strictly forbidden. This pushed the administration to take serious procedures against this act. Sad and Kutlu (2009) pointed out that academic graffiti can be seen as a form of peer teaching and learning, where students share insights and educational content informally.

### **Quotes**

Figure n°32 is considered as a philosophical expression proposed by Frederick Nietzsche,

written in English language. Nietzsche is a famous German philosopher, who lives between 1844 and 1900 .He was well known for his original ideas and writings regarding various philosophical domains. One of his famous saying is " Thoughts are the Shadows of our feelings " . This can be interpreted as that it is not necessary that our thoughts and perceptions reflect our true reality and nature, but rather the reflection or results of what we feel and understand the world. Nietzsche was against rational thinking. For him our thoughts and ideas are just important in shaping our understanding of the world. Along with this there is painting of a yellow lamp with white clouds. In philosophy each one has its unique meaning the lamp represent reality, while the clouds depict the meaning of thoughts. This refers directly to the cited quotation. The graffiti aims are to illustrate the strong connection between thoughts and emotions, and to encourage people to understand themselves better and be aware of their thoughts and emotions.

Figure n°35 consists of the English quotation written by Simone de Beauvoir in her autobiographical work " Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter" published in 1958. She was a very famous philosopher, feminist and author, living from 1908 to 1986 in Paris. She was well known for her creativity and ideas about diverse philosophical concepts. One of her famous saying is " Be loved be admired be necessary be somebody ". This can be viewed as feeling worthy and that your contribution in life no matter how tiny it is it still has meaning to someone. In other words, this phrase gives people hope to never underestimate themselves and knowing that everyone is needed. Also, "Be loved" can be decoded as a feeling of seeking for acceptance, care and emotionally related based on our innate needs. then, " Be admired " it refers to the desire of someone to be respected , esteemed and calculated in others ' perspectives. Besides, " Be necessary" can be interpreted as a feeling of being indispensable , having importance, value, positive purpose and impact in life. Lastly, "Be somebody" refers to the strong feeling of being a successful person .This is through having self worth , confidence

and feeling that one's existence is for being a meaningful and important dependent person. The artist's aim in writing this graffiti is to evoke a desire to be a positive, respected, and productive individual, in order to achieve personal goals and being a meaningful member of society, and this is achieved through a strong feeling of self-confidence and self-worth.

### **Lyrics and Music**

Graffiti incorporating a song's music and lyrics can be seen as an artistic expression to convey sentimental, personal messages that exist behind the songs. The presented figures represent the influence and emotional power of music that MMU's students tend to express by writing the lyrics and the album's name as a form of graffiti. "Long Live Rock 'n' Roll" refers to the third album of the British heavy metal band Rainbow, published in 1978 by Ronnie James Dio. This expression shows a love for rock music that will never disappear. Additionally, "Blues is easy to play but hard to feel" is a quote by Jimi Hendrix. This quote may express that blues as a kind of music is very narrative; every note can express a particular emotion and feeling, and this can be understood only by the singer and his followers. The last one, "The sun will rise and we'll try again," is a lyric from the song "Truce" by Twenty One Pilots. In other words, despite life's challenges and difficulties, there will always be another day when all these difficulties will disappear and be replaced by positive things. The aim of the artists drawing is to popularize the songs or express their personal feelings.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the findings from the analysis of students' graffiti, following Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic framework (1931). It sought to answer the research questions asked in the General Introduction. The first section addressed the languages used in the graffiti and the reasons behind the students' choices and at the second section examined the various themes deduced from the corpus. Overall, this chapter provided a comprehensive understanding of the graffiti's semiotic and thematic dimensions.

## *General Conclusion*

## General Conclusion

The theme of this research, "A Semiotic Thematic Analysis of Graffiti in Selected Departments at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou," focuses on exploring graffiti as a multifaceted form of communication. Graffiti, often dismissed as mere vandalism, serves as a significant medium through which individuals express their identities, cultural backgrounds, political views, and personal thoughts. By analyzing graffiti through a semiotic lens, this study aims to uncover the deeper meanings and messages conveyed by these visual and textual elements within the university setting.

Persian semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation, provides a framework for understanding how meaning is constructed and communicated through graffiti. By employing Peirce's triadic model, which includes the representamen (the form of the sign), the interpretant (the meaning generated by the sign), and the object (the referent to which the sign refers), this research systematically decodes the graffiti to reveal the cultural, social, and political narratives embedded within. The primary aim of this study was to conduct a semiotic thematic analysis of graffiti in selected departments at Mouloud Mammeri University. The research sought to explore the languages, types, and themes of graffiti to understand the diverse ways in which students express themselves. The specific research questions guiding this study were: what are the languages used in the graffiti? And which predominantly themes emerged from the graffiti?

To address these questions, we employed a qualitative research method, relying on Peirce's triadic model and qualitative content analysis. This approach allowed us to systematically interpret the signs and symbols within the graffiti, providing a deeper understanding of the meanings conveyed. The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the graffiti at Mouloud Mammeri University. The graffiti featured five languages: French, Arabic, English, Berber, and a small amount of Spanish. This multilingual nature of the graffiti underscores the linguistic diversity and the layered identities of the students. English is the most commonly used language by students, reflecting their personal thoughts and emotions. French as a prominent language of education and administration in Algeria, often used in graffiti to engage with political and cultural themes. Arabic, reflecting its status as an official language in Algeria, Arabic graffiti convey religious messages. Berber the indigenous language of the region, was prominently used to express cultural pride and identity. The occasional use of Spanish highlighted the influence of global languages and cultures on the

student body. The hypothesis that the languages used in the graffiti would include Arabic, French, English and Berber is confirmed, with the addition of some Spanish language graffiti.

The thematic analysis of the graffiti revealed several key themes reflecting the students' cultural identity, religious beliefs, political engagement, academic life, and personal experiences. Themes of Berber culture and identity were prevalent, with students using symbols, language, and references to historical figures to express pride and solidarity. Depictions of important national and religious figures also served as a visual homage. The graffiti addressed political issues and governance, showcasing the students' awareness and activism. Expressions related to academic life, challenges, and aspirations were also common, along with more personal messages, quotes, and musical influences. The analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the students' concerns, interests, and multifaceted identities as expressed through the diverse forms of graffiti.

This deeper examination of the linguistic, stylistic, and thematic aspects of graffiti at Mouloud Mammeri University has provided valuable insights into the ways students use graffiti to communicate and express their identities, beliefs, and interests. The study's findings highlight the rich and diverse nature of graffiti as a form of visual and textual communication.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The selection of graffiti was confined to specific departments, which may not represent the entire university. Additionally, the interpretation of graffiti is inherently subjective, and different analysts might derive varying conclusions. The study also did not account for the temporal aspect of graffiti, which could change over time, reflecting evolving student sentiments. Time constraints also limited our ability to access and analyze graffiti from all parts of the university. Some graffiti were omitted due to their illegibility or inaccessibility during the research period. These limitations suggest that our findings might not fully capture the entirety of graffiti culture at the university.

Future research could expand the scope to include graffiti from all departments and campuses of the university to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Studies could examine

how graffiti themes evolve over time, offering insights into changing student dynamics and societal influences. Further exploration into the impact of specific socio-political events on graffiti content could also be valuable. Additionally, comparative studies between universities in different regions could highlight regional differences and similarities in student expressions through graffiti. For instance, a study could track the evolution of graffiti themes over several years, providing insights into how student concerns and expressions change in response to external events and internal developments. Comparative studies could explore how graffiti reflects different cultural, political, and social contexts, offering a broader understanding of graffiti as a global phenomenon.

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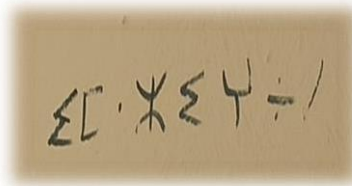
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# *Appendices*

## Appendices

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### Appendix A : Graffiti related to Culture and identity



## Appendices

### Appendix B : Graffiti related to Figures



### Appendix C : Graffiti related to Politics

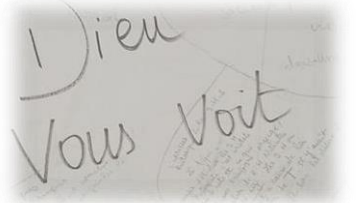
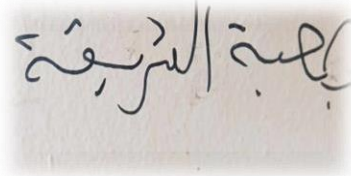
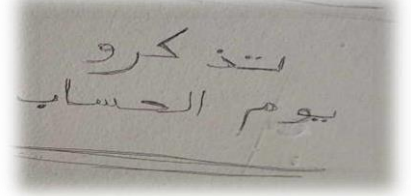
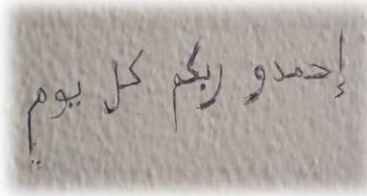
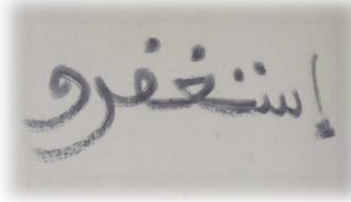
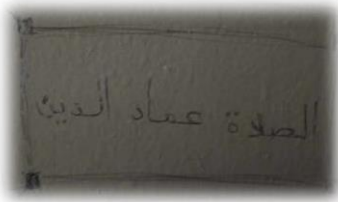


## Appendices

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### Appendix D : Graffiti related to Religion



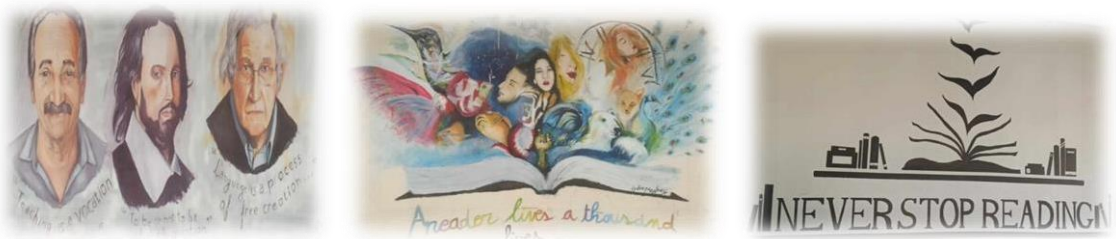
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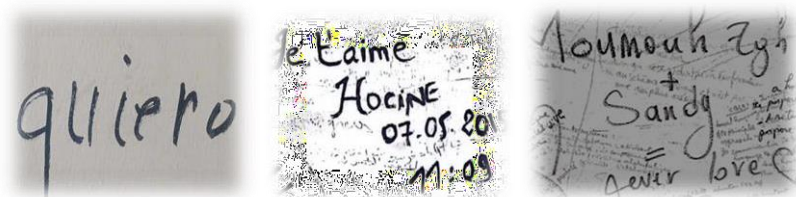
### Appendix E: Graffiti related to Biology



### Appendix F: Graffiti related to Education



### Appendix G: Graffiti related to Personal Expression



Appendices

GILLES ♥ HAYE

THINK  
OUTSIDE  
THE BOX  
X O X  
O O X O  
O O X O

Handwritten Arabic text with a drawing of a person.

22/08/2014  
IDIR

REALLY ☺!  
In your Dreams  
Maybe  
Keep it

ARDEZ LES  
LIEUX PROPRE  
S.V.P \*

EVEN  
GIRLS

Just dance

guess  
who's back

How do I explain  
this feeling. Explain it to you

Saham \*

Eid jari ☹️

sumi is real

FRANCE

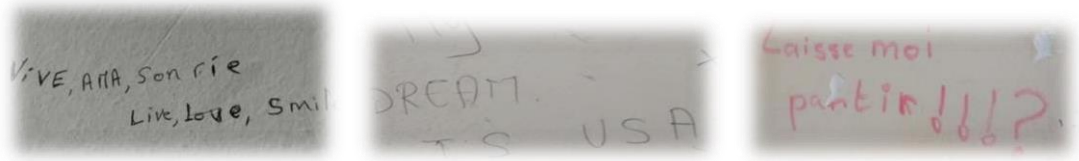
Let  
I ZIE

Shut up! Idiot!  
IDIOT!

We found  
nothing

The sun will rise  
and we'll try again.

## Appendices



### Appendix H: Graffiti related to Academic notes



### Appendix I: Graffiti related to Quotes



**Appendix J: Graffiti related to Music and lyrics**

Long Live  
Rock N' ROLL  
!m!

BLUES is easy to  
play... but hard to  
feel... !m!

The sun will rise  
and we'll try again.

FALL  
OUT  
BOY