

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF GRAFFITI ARTS USED IN
SURAKARTA



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

People all around the world use many ways to express their feeling. Feeling of sad, happy, angry, and even dissatisfaction can be shown differently according to the people themselves. Not only for the ordinary people; the handicapped people, for instance, will also have their own ability to make others understand their attitude. In this case, they can use sign language or special body language in order to deliver the messages which can't be told by using utterance.

In fact, it is easier to catch what people feel rather than to know what they intent to say. For example, we will know whether a person is happy or not by looking through his/ her face. Smile often shows happiness and cry sometimes tells sadness. Although most of people use oral expression to communicate each other, it is possible to find more difficulties when understanding their feeling if they do not use either body language. Communicating by using both oral statement and body language is the most effective way to convey people's feeling.

The development in every part of the country demands a lot of people to have a better ability in communication. The way people communicate will lead to their success. That's why in some cases, a person who has better technique in communication to others will get a higher position in his/ her institution. Public speaker is a good example for this situation. As a front liner in an institution, public speaker has a job to connect between that institution where he/ she works to the community who sometimes needs information regarding to it. Thus, people

will think that an institution can be called as a good institution if it also has good communication skill.

Nowadays, people are free to express their feeling. It's very different if we take a look in the past 20 years. In that time, we could not say something directly as our mind wanted to say. Government was very strict about this matter. Someone even got in jail just because making critics to the government. This prolonged condition made people afraid of expressing their ideas. They thought that silence was the best way to keep them alive.

No one had the courage to stop the regime until the year of 1998 when the reformation happened. The very first wave of demonstration occurred in Jakarta and then followed by other regions including Solo. A lot of people did everything for only one purpose: they wanted to be heard by the government. The emotion which has been kept for many years finally exploded into anarchist, vandalism, robbery, and another immoral action. After many died victims numbered, government had no other choice except to fulfill what they wanted. Because of these efforts, nowadays people have the right to express their feeling directly to public without fear of being caught as long as it does not run against the rule.

As the people's needs increase, they find new functions of communication in delivering their idea to the public. In the very first age of human beings, communication is used for expressing and signaling. It happens to babies who use crying and hand gestures when delivering their intention.

Descriptive function is the next process which is acquired by the babies. In this period, the babies grow into children and turn to be teenagers who have reached their mind to the higher level. The function of communication now is to describe something around them.

The argumentative function is the final process. It happens when they achieve adolescence stage and find problems in their life to be confronted and solved. By getting the answer of the problem, they'll get experiences to be used for handling the more complex situation.

People have their own way in delivering idea to the public. They can speak it directly or writtenly by using a kind of letter. This letter could be a form of advice, suggestion, or critics. In the past, there was only a few media to be used when people expressing their feeling. Sending letter was the common way to do such a thing; compared to the present time, people use telephone, internet, newspaper, and even wall.

Wall is the suitable place for those who want to say something in a different way. This can be included into vandalism action if they do not ask for permission to the owner of the wall. People who like to do it usually draw some pictures and texts that contain various messages. Generally, the picture on the wall is called “graffiti art” and the person who draws it is called “grafter”.

Recently, graffiti can be found everywhere on the street. Especially for big cities like Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Bandung, and Semarang; graffiti tends to be mushrooming. Even in a small city like Solo, people can easily found it on every strategic location.

Not every people understand the message contained in graffiti. They only look at the shape and the color regardless about the meaning that the grafter wants to say. Grafter indeed inserts theme in every graffiti art. Politic became a famous theme in the past decades for grafters when they felt dissatisfied with their government condition.

By using graffiti as the media, grafter can send critics and comments which cannot be said by the usual way of speaking toward the government. In Jakarta, there was a graffiti about the rejection of RUU APP (*Anti Pornografi Anti Pornoaksi*). This was made by the grafters because they thought that with the existence of RUU APP, there will be a limitation in expressing their ideas (see: appendix, [1]).

Another example of critics by using graffiti can be found in the border between Israel and Palestine. This graffiti showed a picture of two children who played happily with the scenery of beach above them (see: appendix, [2]). The message that the grafters wanted to say was dealing with peace since the war between both countries are still happening until now.

A further usual theme to be employed sometimes deals with feeling. It is like that they use walls as the second diary book. No matter whether they feel falling in love or being angry of something, grafters prefer to write it on the wall. Unfortunately, most grafters use difficult technique in creating their works. Thus, the message that should be conveyed certainly will not be understood by public.

The writer uses sociolinguistics' point of view in describing the meaning of graffiti arts found in Solo. Finding any possible register which is used by the grafters in Solo will become another effort to be done in this study. From the better understanding on the meaning, grafters can use this research as a bridge in delivering their messages to the public. Moreover, public are supposed to change their bad perception about graffiti arts which are assumed as troublesome works from time to time.

B. Previous Study

The study of using sociolinguistics has been done by a student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Kusumawati (2006). In her study entitled “A STUDY ON THE USE OF LEXICAL HEDGES IN *THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY*: SOCIOLINGUISTICS APPROACH”, she found that lexical hedges can be categorized into seven, they are introductory phrases, modal lexical verb (or speech act verb), probability adjectives, interrogative utterance, compound hedges, modal auxiliary verbs, and if clauses. She used the Hymes' SPEAKING theory to find some reason of the use of lexical hedges. They are to soften an utterance, to show uncertainty, to weaken an utterance, to show self esteem, to show under estimation, and to show unseriousness. Different reasons may result different type of their category of SPEAKING theory.

There are some other sociolinguistic studies that can be used by the writer as the previous study. Take an example of a research that has been done by Wijana and Rohmadi (2006: 55). They found that Javanese people recently are included into diglosia (local and Indonesian language), triglosia (local, Indonesian, and English language), or even pluriglosia (local, Indonesian, English, and the other foreign languages like France, Japanese, Chinese, etc). A number of Indonesian linguists also did researches dealing with sociolinguistics on local language. One of them is Muhajir (1979) who studied the function and the role of local language, Jakarta's dialect for instance, in the connection with national language within daily life activities (in Wijana and Rohmadi, 2006: 57). The other Indonesian sociolinguistics study can be seen in their book. Thus Masinambow and Haenan (2000) stated a sociolinguistics constellation in Indonesia as the one of the most interesting language context in the world.

The difference of this study from the previous ones is located on the way of analyzing the data. Though the writers use sociolinguistics, it does not mean to be a kind of plagiarism. The writer is intended to find both the register and the function of graffiti arts in social action by using sociolinguistics' point of view. Compared to the first previous study, she analyzed the data in a movie manuscript of *There's Something about Mary* to get the use of lexical hedges. From this explanation, the writer hopes that this study could become another collection of research which uses sociolinguistics as the basic theory.

C. Limitation of the Study

The register that will be analyzed in this research is limited by the sociolinguistics' point of view. Sociolinguistic study uses interview technique in collecting the data to know the social background of the informers. It is important to identify their social background in order to determine the register which is used by them. Grafter who is still in high school, for example, tends to use the very common register in graffiti like *tag*, *bomber*, or *bubble style* without knowing the register which is usually used by senior grafter like *blackbook* and *old school*. Referring to this condition, writer chooses to make a limitation in interview by doing it with grafters who have been joining graffiti community for more than a year. The finding of register is mostly taken from the data in interview instead of the questionnaire.

The next limitation of this study deals with the style of graffiti arts. The writer will not analyze the form of graffiti arts directly from their shapes because it will use stylistic theory. Since the writer uses sociolinguistics in this study, it is possible to discuss the style of graffiti arts according to the grafters' purpose of writing which are engaged in social action.

D. Problem Statements

After giving the explanation about the background of the study, the writer arranges the problems of this research as follows:

1. What are the registers of graffiti arts used in Surakarta?
2. What are the functions of graffiti arts found in Surakarta?
3. What are the most styles used by graffiti artists in Surakarta?

E. Objectives of the Study

This research has been intended to:

1. Analyze the register of graffiti arts used by grafters in the area of Surakarta by using Sociolinguistics' theories.
2. Analyze the meaning and function of graffiti art pictures in Surakarta.
3. Analyze the purpose of grafters within their style of writing.

F. Benefits of the Study

1. Academic Benefits
 - a. This study can be used as the previous study for those who have the willingness to do a further research about any terms dealing with graffiti art.
 - b. This study is a useful source for people who want to learn more about grafter's community located in Solo.
2. Practical Benefits
 - a. The result of this study will be useful for the readers who want to know further about graffiti arts.
 - b. This study can be used by the grafters to deliver their messages to the readers.

- c. By using this study, public are supposed to change their perception about graffiti into a better one because graffiti doesn't always have bad intentions within it.

G. Research Paper Organization

The organization of research paper is given in order to help the readers understand the content of the papers as follow:

Chapter I Introduction, it consists of background of the study, previous study, limitation of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, and benefits of the study.

Chapter II Underlying theory, it consists of theories to assist the writer in doing the study. The theories are: sociolinguistic view on language study, language variation, register, context of situation, linguistic forms, and the notion of graffiti art.

Chapter III Research Method, it consists of type of research, object of the research, data and source of the data, method of data collection, and technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV Research Result and Discussion, it consists of data analysis and the discussion of the findings which has the intention to analyze the data to find the register, function, and style of the graffiti arts.

Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestion.