

Research Article

Signs in Urban Anti-sexualism Harassment Graffiti: Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract.

In this study, the researcher focuses mainly on the analysis of the visual and verbal signs and how the meaning of semiotic signs is realized in graffiti. This study is based on library research and uses the descriptive-qualitative method to analyze the data. The data for this study is ten urban anti-sexualism harassment graffiti, collected by downloading the images from the websites of *Pinterest* and *Google*. Graffiti is a form of visual communication that mostly consist of writings and drawings that have been made on public surfaces, mainly the walls. The theory for visual signs was used to analyze the data of the semiotic *Triadic Model* proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, whereas the theory of Dyer was used to analyze verbal signs. The analysis revealed that visual signs mainly indicate character movement in graffiti and emotions. The verbal signs support visual signs by highlighting some aspects in graffiti to convey information about how people should be more concerned about anti-sexual harassment issues that occur in life. In addition, the analysis of this study also shows that meaningful events are created by the relationship between visual and verbal signs contained in each graffiti.

Keywords: semiotics, graffiti, signs, Peirce, Dyer

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is means of communication used by all human beings in the world to tell someone about something. There are six functions of language, which an effective act of verbal communication can be described:[1] referential function, directive function, expressive function, phatic or social function, poetic function, and metalinguistic function.

Peirce, an American linguist and philosopher, stated that semiotics is a science, with the findings & theories, and technique to study anything that produced signs [2]. Peirce defined triangle theory or triangle meaning consisting of three elements; sign, object, and interpretant. For the sake of simplicity, the writer interprets the sign as the signifier, for example, a written word, an utterance, smoke as a sign for fire etc. The object, on the


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other hand, is best thought of as whatever is signified, for example, the object to which the written or uttered word attaches, or the fire signified by the smoke. The interpretant, the most innovative and distinctive feature of Peirce's account, is best thought of as the understanding that we have of the sign/object relation.

In the research presented by Dyer in 1982 indicates that the word means drawing attention to something, or notifying and informing somebody of something, in order to get attention of audiences. There signs used to deliver the message. When the advertisers want to draw someone's attention to certain products and persuade someone to buy and use the products or services, the advertising media becomes the most appropriate media to be used [3].

There are various kinds of advertising media. Not only advertisement, but also graffiti, there having signs to deliver the message, the graffiti that are painted on the street are mostly the reflection of designs that spread powerful messages embedded culturally into the society. From public walls to buildings, artists have chosen to deliver powerful messages to the residents and visitors of the city, messages that are laden with thought provoking images and text.

Refers to the ideological function of advertisements as well as the real messages which are hidden behind their superficial gloss [4]. Dyer states that advertisement "construct ideology within themselves through the intervention of external codes which are located in society". [4] stated that word not only describes things, communicate feelings, associations and attitudes, but they also bring to our mind.

Semiotics, or semiology, is the study of signs, symbols, and signification as communicative behavior, especially as elements of language or other systems of communication. It is also the study of how meaning is created. It explores how words and other signs make meaning. The definition of semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and of their meaning and use. A sign can be located anywhere, a sign in words form, a sign in human gesture, a sign in traffic ways, a sign in national flag and every object that manifest a meaning which can be determined as sign.

Semiotics includes visual and verbal as well as tactile and olfactory signs (all signs or signals which are accessible to and can be perceived by all our senses) as they form code systems which systemically communicate information or messages in literary every field of human behavior and enterprise.

The reasons why the researcher chose this topic is because, the branches of linguistics always related to each other, in creating communication, utterance is helped by

the context, in order to avoid any miscommunication between the speaker and hearer. Thus, the visualization is also important as an impactful way to make the communication get more realistic. The visualization itself can be found in art which includes paintings, graphic design, movie, posters, wall painting, body paintings and so on. Art is the mirror of society; art can also be the inspiration for a society. In this study, the researcher will take one of art's representation, graffiti as the objects. Especially the graffiti whose contents conceive Urban Anti Sexualism Harassment.

This research tried to clarify the problems into some questions, they are: What are the semiotic meanings found in the signs of Urban Anti sexualism harassment graffiti? How are the verbal semiotic signs realized in the Urban Anti sexualism harassment graffiti. The research objectives are to identify the semiotic meanings found in the sign of Urban Anti sexualism Harassment graffiti, to describe the realization of semiotic verbal signs found in the Urban Anti Sexualism Harassment graffiti.

The first relevant study was conducted research by Hawan (2017). The aim of the study is to find semiotic signs and how the meaning of semiotic signs is realized in the selected movies poster. The similarity between this previous study with the current study is because the researcher was using qualitative descriptive method and Triadic Semiotic theory in which proposed by Peirce about Visual Aspect. The contribution of this study is to give understanding about how posters can interpret meanings through its verbal and visual aspects. The next relevant study the researcher reviewed is the journal article conducted by Hasan (2014). He analyzed five graffiti around Bandung city by using Roland Barthes' theory. Barthes' Framework is applied to find out the meaning of graffiti. This previous study used qualitative descriptive method and also by doing an interview with the Bomber of Act Move to enrich the data and make the clear understanding of his study. The finding of this study is the meaning of denotation, connotation and myth or ideology of the graffiti with the supporting theory by Roland Barthes [5]. The results of this study give contribution to the writer to an understanding of the exploration and interpretation the meaning beyond and surface of graffiti, the similarity of the object in graffiti field and same using of the method for both researches also being helpful contribution in the finishing of current study.

Graffiti is a form of visual communication which mostly contains writings and drawings that have been made in the public surface and mainly at the walls [6]. "Social spaces became a platform for people to express their frustrations and deep-rooted resentments. The world became their canvas and they began mapping social symbols through

graffiti art on public spaces for the geo specific audiences, with symbols ranging from individual to social perceptions". Graffiti works as a form of visual communication, a room for dialogue with the world through visual art. It can be a social, cultural or political commentary that links the world to these art forms.

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment involving the use of explicit or implicit sexual overtones, including the unwelcome and inappropriate promises of rewards in exchange for sexual favors [7]. Sexual harassment includes a range of actions from verbal transgressions to sexual abuse or assault. Harassment can occur in many different social settings such as the workplace, the home, school, churches, etc. Harassers or victims may be of any sex or gender. In modern legal contexts, sexual harassment is illegal. Laws surrounding sexual harassment generally do not prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or minor isolated incidents that is due to the fact that they do not impose a "general civility code."

2. METHODS

In this research the researcher used qualitative method to analyze the data, in order to understand the semiology states in the correlated Anti Sexualism Graffiti. Qualitative research methods provide more emphasis on interpretation and providing consumers with complete views, looking at contexts, environmental immersions and a depth of understanding of concepts.

The researcher uses the techniques documentation to collect the data. These following steps are applied in collecting the data: Downloading the Pinterest and Google application from Apps Store via researcher's smartphone and login to the existed account of the writers. Searching and observing the related data in the Search Tab using tag line such as "Sexualism Harassment Art", "Street Art", "Woman Graffiti", "Urban Graffiti", "Anti- Harassment Graffiti", etc. Sorting and selecting the pictures of required data and download all of the selected data to then be analyzed by relevant theory to get the conclusion. Meanwhile in collecting the data by using Documentation method, the writer obtained the documentation from supporting books in the internet, article in the internet, thesis, and international journal.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed visual sign by using Peirce's Triadic model which consist of representamen, object, and interpretant, and for analyzed verbal sign by using Dyer's Theory.

The researcher elaborates in detail, the result of the analysis about triadic sign Peirce and Dyer theory of urban anti sexualism harassment graffities. Peirce's theory was used to dig the meaning of any signs in the graffities. The representamen can be classified to qualisign, sinsign, and legisign. The object divides into three classifications, they are icon, symbol, and index. The interpretant has rheme, dicent, and argument. The written language or the verbal sign in the graffiti have been analyzed by using Dyer theory, delivers the information of how people should be more aware toward the sexualism harassment issues that occur in life.




Figure 1: Data 1: Analysis of Visual and Verbal Sign in Sexual Harassment is A Crime.

The Visual is analyzed by using Peirce's Triadic Model:

Based on its representamen, Peirce divides signs into three, called Qualisign, Sinsign, and Legisign. The **qualisign** (quality of the signs) found in that data is color that contain in the graffiti are black, white, red and yellow. The **sinsign** (actual event of the sign) found the event and expression showed by the character, the expression of the woman who shows displeasure, sadness, worry and confusion; proven by the raised eyebrows.

Based on its object, Peirce divides signs into three, called icon, index, and symbol. The **icon** found in this sign is the picture of a woman who wearing a veil while glaring up and her mouth is covered with a red hand. The researcher called it as an icon because it resembles the real woman who expresses women's struggle to battle against

TABLE 1

| No | Representation | Object | Interpretant |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1. | Pair of Eyes  | Pair of glaring eyes | A pair of glaring eyes as if the woman was looking into the eyes of the abuser. Trying to beg her to be released (the perpetrator did not abuse her). And she is remembering an image or event, she will turn her eyes to the upper left. |
| 2. | Big hand | A big red hand | A big red hand like a man's hand. The big hand is right in the mouth of a woman where the man is trying to cover the woman's mouth so that she can just shut up and say nothing about what he has done. |
| 3. | Veil | A woman wear a veil wrapped around her head | The tradition of veiled women in religion came into play in Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. These various religions interpreted their own scriptures that a woman should be veiled to show respect and reverence for their Lord. In the Christian world, the veil is often used in prayer and when attending church. For the Muslim religion, it is not only worn as a symbolic gesture, but is also part of the Islamic culture, and in some places, required by law to this day. |
| 4. | Raised eyebrows | A pair of eyebrows raised in surprise. | An expression of someone who show serious it. It also implies someone to disapprove or approve challenges. In this context, it represents woman's bravery against street harassment. |

sexual harassment which mostly done by male. The **symbol** found in this sign is show her strength about fighting for female to stop the silence that befell women so that it doesn't happen again. The **index** found in this sign is verbal sign which used to inform pedestrians and people who passes by on public street about sexual harassment issues that happened to women.

The **interpretant** in this sign is cause numerous of women encountered countless times of miserable walk-in-public experiences. Some even have to live with it, as society has become strangely tolerant of this "minor", "harmless" form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment which is one of the most traumatic things that can happen to anyone.

The verbal sign which has been analyzed by using Dyer Theory. There are two verbal signs found in this graffiti. The first verbal is “SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A CRIME” Which provides the information to tell everyone that Sexual harassment is not a trivial matter but a criminal act that must be taken seriously. The second verbal sign found in this graffiti is “BREAK THE SILENCE” which signified to notify victims of harassment to report perpetrators of sexual harassment to the authorities. No more silence about this important case.



Figure 2: Analysis of Visual and Verbal Sign in RIP Yuyun KUTUK PELAKU KEKERASAN SEX Graffiti.


The Visual is analyzed by using Peirce’s Triadic Model:

Based on its representamen, Peirce divides signs into three, called Qualisign, Sinsign, and Legisign. The **qualisign** (quality of the signs) found in that data is color that contain in the graffiti are blue, white, dark blue, pink, green, black, brown, purple, grey. The **sinsign** (actual event of the sign) found the event and expression showed by the character, the expression of the woman who shows displeasure, sadness, worry and confusion; proven by the teary eyes.

Based on its object, Peirce divides signs into three, called icon, index, and symbol. Icon is signs that has resemblance with the fact of what is refers. The **icon** found in this sign is the picture of a group of colorful figures gathered together around a girl whose half of her face was being covered with a large hand. The researcher called it as an icon because it resembles an underage girl has been the victim of rape by several men. The **symbol** found in this sign is an underage girl with long hair whose half of her face was being covered with a hand and has been the victim of rape by several men. The **index** found in this sign is verbal sign on that graffiti.

The **interpretant** in this sign is There has been the death of an underage girl named Yuyun who was 14 years old. She is a junior high school student in Bengkulu who

TABLE 2

| No | Representment | Object | Interpretant |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1. |  Pink love | Big pink love | Big pink love heart is expressing passionate love, apologetic, happiness, excitement, and also feeling of health. where the intention of the creator of painting Heart of love is that if we both condemn or severely punish the perpetrator of sexual violence, there will be happiness, joy, and love that will approach or be felt by all victims of sexual harassment, even for all women and the next generation. |
| 2. | Purple love | Big purple love heart with pair of eyes | Purple love heart is representation of love, support, close bonds and sexuality. Inside of purple love, there is a pair of eyes which is interpreted as someone who is indirectly supporting the victim of abuse to stay strong to continue to fight, fight, and condemn sexual violence. it means they are not alone. |
| 3. | Hand | A big brown hand | A big brown hand like a man's hand. The big hand is right in the mouth of a woman where the man is trying to cover the woman's mouth so that she can just shut up and say nothing about what he has done. |
| 4. | Woman | A woman with long hair | a woman with long hair whose mouth is covered with a big hand, she is a victim of sexual harassment her name is Yuyun |

was raped by several men. This is a big warning and lesson for all parties, especially the police, so that the same thing doesn't happen again. save the next generation by punishing the rapists to death.

The Verbal Signs which have been analyzed by using Dyer theory:

There are two verbal signs found in this graffiti. The first verbal signs is "RIP Yuyun" which indicates that one of the names of victims of sexual harassment who had died because of being raped by several men. Yuyun is a 14 year old junior high school student in Bengkulu, Indonesia.

The second verbal signs is "KUTUK PELAKU KEKERASAN SEX" which provides curse words or swear words from the artist for the perpetrators of sexual assault. There is no mercy so the words "Curse" even then come out. so scary.

The Peirce theory used the triadic model to find the relation between the representment, the object and the interpretant. The Dyer theory used to find the verbal sign or the written text in the graffiti

Based on the selected data of urban anti sexualism harassment graffities in this research, it is realized that visual and verbal signs in semiotics play important role to deliver the meaning of signs itself to then be interpreted for society. In this case, the urban anti sexualism harassment graffities deliver the message for people to always be aware of the issues for street harassment, gender inequality, women rights, sexual harassment and the importance of voice your opinions so that there will be changes for better for women.

The graffities in this study are dominated by the figure of women, realized by body gestures, expressions. Colors of the graffities are made in order to make the graffities look powerful, colorful and meaningful for the people especially women.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The semiotic signs found in the urban anti sexualism harassment graffities are visual and verbal signs. Each graffities contain picture of women and other supporting elements such as veil, that associated with sexualism harassment. There is no mystical object found in the graffities.

The meaning of semiotic signs in the ten urban anti sexualism harassment graffities are realized through using Peirce's Triadic semiosis which are representamen, object and interpretant. The visual sign such as the background, color, activity also have their own meanings. Those signs provide the information to the viewers about the character of the graffiti, expression, emotion, pose, clothes of those characters and what they do.

The written language or the verbal signs in the graffiti have been analyzed by using Dyer theory, delivers the information of how people should be more aware toward the sexualism harassment issues that occur in life.

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This Team realized that this activity was far from perfect, because there were still many shortcomings in it. This is due to limitations both in terms of ability, knowledge and experience. Therefore, we expect constructive criticism and suggestions so that further activities can be even better.

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