

Graffiti Discourse Analysis in Bontoc, Mountain Province: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

This paper analyses the fabrication of graffiti as an unconventional communication channel for the locals of Bontoc, Mountain Province focusing in language content, purposes, discourse domains and themes using the writings collected on public transportations particularly on tricycles and on public spaces. Insights from Corpus-Based Theory utilizing Braun & Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis and Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis which concerns the usage of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a concept proposed by M.A.K. Halliday that offers the basis for language study in context and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) recommended by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) which was beneficial not only in examining the texts, but also analysing the visual components. These theories were used to answer the following problems: (1) to determine the various discourse domains of public transportation and public spaces graffiti in central Bontoc; and (2) to examine the communication content that includes the intention of inscription. Qualitative method was employed in the analysis and it was interpreted that graffiti on the selected sites contribute a collective interactive linguistic style employed to show the inscribers' creativity, imagination, and freedom of expression. In Bontoc, Mountain Province, graffiti have been observed as a noteworthy and substantial cultural sensation over a long period.

Keywords: graffiti, Bontoc, language content, discourse domains.

Introduction

Graffiti is both art and crime that embodies cultural implication and phenomenon which characterizes an inventive and imaginative subculture with a message seen by the public. However, it has great significant issues to the locals who find it as activities and/or its results attractive with artistic technique while others see it as a catalogue of social deterioration, undesirable annoyance, illegal act of vandalism, youth delinquency, and results to the destruction of public or private property (Blommaert, 2016; El-Nashar & Nayef, 2016; Karlander, 2016; Stampoulidis, 2016; Vanderveen & Eijk, 2016).

In Bontoc, Mountain Province, graffiti have been observed as a noteworthy and substantial cultural sensation. Nevertheless, people still linger to engrave visibly on walls in public spaces, messages printed on stickers and written or drawn on the public transportation around the municipality as an appearance of the individual's communal principles, spiritual beliefs, sexual contents, and governmental associations, and others that is not intended for a commercial purpose in spite of the fact that social media can offer an opportunity for them to express their opinions and thoughts freely.

This is parallel to Farnia's (2014) assertion that graffiti inscription persuades and drives people to inscribe on the walls to expressing their irritation, hasty views and opinions, care, private statement, political affirmation, or even their turmoil and such statements in public. People who were essentially disenfranchised and marginalized by the wider society, they found public inscription as a very powerful channel of expression their sentiments. As for Tracy's statement (2005, 22), she claims that "graffiti have also been observed and studied by scholars as a way to express their freedom of expression as people are kept mysterious."

Through running a qualitative analysis of graffiti, this study will be attempting to discern the thematic categories, communication contents (lexical and syntactic features), and functions of graffiti especially on tricycles and domains that display an attention-grabbing form of communication both in style and content as well as the purposes of inscription that calls for scholarly attention.

Review of Related Literature

Although there are wide-ranging contemporary researches on graffiti on public spaces, there are few studies discovering graffiti on public transportation like the tricycles and jeepneys in the Philippines which according to Blanton (2015) are the "most popular mode of public transportation especially in the roads in the Philippines". It was suggested that chances are still there to interpret how graffiti in other settings function to express the opinions of the locals and carry out the issues and concerns that motivate them. To the researchers, very few studies were done on the Filipino context and none was done on the tricycles as number one public transportation around the town of Bontoc. With this end in view, the present study, then, analyses the public transportations and public spaces like thoroughfares' walls, building walls, and comfort rooms in line for the free will, secrecy, and freedom of expression given to the graffitiists.

According to Chilwa (2008), the term 'graffiti' is derived from the Italian word 'graffito' which is used to refer to any form of what is inscribed or pasted on public walls or surfaces usually bearing some political or sexual substances, a lover's pledge, suggestions and schemes, or indecent words. It is also termed as "street art" as mentioned by Alexiou (2017); Bloch (2017); Bianchi and Viti (2017); Ferrel (2017); Iverson (2017); and Ulmer (2017). Blume (1987); Al-Khawaldeh, et al., (2017); and Young (2017) extends the term's definition as any unwanted graphic or written inscriptions by typical anonymous people in several public surfaces with no authorized formation is completed. Graffiti have been considered as a diagram of a frank illustration of reality as well as an evolutionary means that has made people reveal on their cultural identity using imaginative and communal styles of expressions as mentioned by Sheivandi et al., (2015) cited from the study of Al-Khawaldeh, et al., (2017).

On Public Spaces

With the latest research on graffiti by Al-Khawaldeh, et al., (2017), they mentioned some the classification of graffiti that are considered hilarious, traditional epigraphy, or historical. One of them is the latrinalia, a graffiti characteristic termed by Dundes (1966) referring to the restrooms' graffiti which Haslam (2012) pointed out as written taboo ideas and highlighted images inside public restrooms by anonymous graffitiists who freely use specific types of language to express sentiments and outlooks in their everyday social life. It is connected with what McGlynn (1972) claimed that anonymous graffiti is a remarkably specific and free display of sentimentality. Another is hilarious graffiti is which was viewed by Gadsby (1995) as a variety of inscription that is firmly shaped to invoke fun. Researchers like Beck (1982) and Warakowski (1991) studied this type of graffiti linguistically to discover what motivated graffitiists to inscribe their sentiments publicly mostly along the streets because is "both a place of travel and a space for critical discourse" (Ulmer, 2017).

On Bontoc Tricycles

[Tricycles] replicate and connect to others the culture, identity, and values of the Filipinos. The images, body construction, inscriptions, beautifications and the like are a symbolism of the Filipino imagination as mentioned by Cerio (2017). There are issues that offer explanations for this study. First, captions on local public transportations such as tricycles and passenger jeeps are a current medium of mass communication in the town of Bontoc, Mountain Province. Several studies focus on writings on public transportations but only a few studies exist on tricycle graffiti. Second, the increase of the public transportations like tricycles, vans, and jeeps in the town of Bontoc certainly

requests for an educational survey. Third, the history of tricycles in Bontoc, Mountain province as well as apprehensions and worries that led to its attractiveness executes that attention should be given to the messages, which the local work force who contributes expressively to the economy of the town desire to relay to the public. Moreover, an enquiry of this nature is destined to propose insights on how language works in media's contexts which are the common factor that contribute to language improvement and the frequent resolutions which language functions. Added to that, an examination and investigation of the language convention of the locals can provide indication that would be developed in a real shifting choices and plans making the town of Bontoc to be developed. This study provides perceptions and observations on the way the "*Ifuntoks*" (*people of Bontoc*) apply language to assist their drives of socio-cultural variables on language. The functionality of language is dominant in language readings and the way people use them for the intention of communicative and planned proficiency is a non-stop enquiry in language studies.

As language researchers, they were inspired on this study to be conducted due to their observation that tricycles and other public transportations, public toilets, and walls of government buildings seem to be the centre of graffiti and according to what was mentioned by Al-Khawaldeh, et al., (2017), it is an avenue for anonymous graffitists to express their opinions and attitudes even if they are taboo in ordinary social life.



Figure 1: Tricycles as a means of commercial transportation in the town of Bontoc. (Photograph taken from www.loupiote.com)



Figure 2: Graffiti on one of the tricycles in Bontoc.

Theoretical Framework

Corpus-Based Theory

This is a corpus-based discourse analysis study which is an unconventional approach to openly analyse the language structure arrangement and usage as they occur in everyday areas, so that functional references are grounded on a concrete practical underpinning. As corpus is defined as a collection of examples of language in use that are selected and compiled in an ethical way (Huang & Yao, 2015; Duan, 2017; Sadi, 2017), the languages used are drawn from messages written on public spaces like school's walls, particularly classrooms', corridors', and toilets' walls and inscriptions from public transportations (tricycles, vans, jeeps, and buses) around Bontoc, Mountain Province.

Thematic Analysis

The Thematic analysis as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) is a flexible qualitative method used to investigate the pertinent groups of meaning of collected data through thematic codes. It is suitable and advantageous to every researchers aiming to scrutinize the data's common themes and thoughts from more than one participant in order to gain a clear logical kind of the participants' opinions and understandings.

Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough (1995), discourse analysis is the study of social life, understood through analysis of language in its widest sense that includes the verbal and non-verbal interaction, images, symbols and documents. It is the study of investigating meanings through conversation or in culture. Using the discourse analysis approach, it incorporates a broad range of theories, themes and other approaches through linguistic analysis of the forms of language usage in relation to their purposes in

the context of communication. One concern is the usage of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a theory propounded by M. A. K. Halliday provides the framework for studying language in context. This theory as Chapelle (1998) posited holds that the form of a language is determined by the function it is made to perform and the multidimensional architecture of language, a reflection of the multidimensional nature of human experience and interpersonal relations. SFG is used to explain the background dimensions of language as a social semiotic. With this, it therefore provides the framework for exploring the meanings which the samples of data for this study are destined to achieve in their framework of practice.

Another theory of discourse analysis considered in this study is the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) which was useful in displaying what the graffitiists prospered in endorsing their inscriptions' powerful messages. Multimodality does not concern only on the message's text, but also on the visual components.

Adopting these theories, this paper will be studying Bontoc public transportation and public spaces graffiti as a social practice, that is, the product of discursive and other practices in the "Ifuntoks" society on both the individual and institutional levels. Viewed as conversational tools in the hands of their authors, such texts are in fact the product of a multifaceted structure of communal and organized practices which produce and reproduce them with a view to maintaining their continuous existence (Fairclough, 1995). These graffiti texts, which serve as a discursive social practice, provide a clear image and profound understanding of the various social changes in the Bontoc society. This paper, then, attempts to answer the following problems which are to determine the various discourse domains of public transportation and public spaces graffiti in central Bontoc; and to examine the content and the purposes of inscription.

Methodology

The study focuses on graffiti in Bontoc, Mountain Province inscribed on public transportations (tricycles and jeepneys) and public spaces (school's lecture rooms, public toilets - both in male and female toilets-, government building walls, public hangouts - public kiosk, public sitting area, parking lot - are chosen as data collection sites.

This study involves linguistic survey, thematic analysis and discourse analysis on the communication contents that focus on the functions the graffiti writings serve on the public transportations and on public spaces. The data on public transportations were collected from different locations in central Bontoc from December, 2017 till May, 2018 where the vehicles are usually parked and on public spaces inscriptions were collected with in public spaces particularly on schools' walls, classrooms, corridors, toilets, public hangouts.

This study therefore adopts the stratified unsystematic sampling to record inscriptions (verbal and non-verbal) found on the public transportation and on public spaces much especially inside the public comfort rooms (both inside the male and female toilets). This study employs structured interviews among selected drivers and owners for the purpose of knowing what is within the inscriptions. For each tricycle inscriptions and to some inscriptions on public spaces both verbal and non-verbal, pictures were taken by the authors. The pictures were analysed visually for distinctive construction and forms and were examined to be grouped into relevant themes in order to study the content and the contextual meanings before the graffiti thereon be transcribed.

Messages were copied verbatim from the tricycles and cars' bumper stickers, car posteriors, window markers and signs, to name a few and to the walls, corridors, and back doors of every public toilet. Thematic coding permits the researchers to evaluate the whole figures by distinguishing its most noteworthy connotation. All local vernacular graffiti will be translated by the researchers into English.

Results and Discussions

In the following sections, the results of each analytical point are discussed.

The Various Discourse Domains of Public Transportation and Public Spaces Graffiti in Central Bontoc

The researchers have proposed three discourse domains used to classify public transportation graffiti in Bontoc, Mountain Province: Spiritual expressions; character expressions; and community, moral, humorous expressions:

Table 1: Total No. of samples for Spiritual Expressions and its language usage

No.	Discourse Domains	Language	No. of samples
1	Spiritual Expressions	English	23
		Bontok	2
		Kankanaey	0
		Ilocano	0
		Tagalog	0
		Lang. Admixture	0
SUB-TOTAL			25

The distinctiveness and uniqueness were attributed to the use of language variations as medium of communication which is a mixture of English and vernacular dialects as reflected in *Table 1* but it is obvious that English is still the foremost language used. English usage on every tricycle's inscriptions in Bontoc, Mountain Province is the commonly used because "it is the language of status marker" as a retired teacher who now drives his own tricycle mentioned. The outcomes of each analytical opinion regarding discourse domains are discussed below;

1. Spiritual Expressions

Most of the inscriptions found at public transportations' bumper fall under the category of spiritual expressions. The researchers categorized it as spiritual expressions documented and analysed as Biblical citations that reflects the distinctive religiosity among the Bontoks that eventually points to social solidity and unity. Furthermore, such documents can be seen as the drivers' way of reducing their angst and worries in life. Their belief in the Almighty one whose guidance never fails decreases the anxiety conveyed by life's problems. Here are some samples of spiritual expressions inscriptions with its sub-themes in the Table 2 below;

Table 2: Examples of spiritual expressions

No.	Biblical Citations
1	Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)
2	The words of the Lord are true (Psalms 33:4)
3	The Lord is my Shepherd
4	I will uphold you with my right hand of justice o Lord (Isaiah 41:10)
5	For God so love the world (John 3:16)
6	Go high & find glory (Psalms 1:29)
No.	Religious Sayings
7	Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth
8	God showed his love for while we were yet sinners.
9	Accept God's gift of everlasting life
10	He sustaineth me
No.	Personal Declarations
11	Jesus is coming soon, the question is are you ready?
12	I believe a man's pride shall bring him down but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit
13	Grant me Oh Lord a steady hand, a watchful eye that none shall be hurt as pass by
14	God is not in a hurry, He is always on time
15	Laylaychem nan ib-am ay takho, kag metlang san menlaycham isnan awak mo. [Love others as you love yourself]

It is common that religious expressions among the “Ifuntoks” can be attributed to the reality that Christianity is considered as fundamental that shows a remarkable role in every aspect of the locals’ lives that is entangled to many of their beliefs.

2. Character/Personal Expressions

Table 3: Total No. of samples for Character/Personal Expressions and its language usage

No.	Discourse Domains	Language	No. of samples
2	Character/Personal Expressions	English	48
		Bontok	15
		Kankanaey	3
		Ilocano	3
		Tagalog	6
		Lang. Admixture	12
SUB-TOTAL			87

Character expression inscriptions are those graffiti phrases and words that deal with self-/car identity or focus on the identity of the other such as “woman”. The former includes names, nicknames, family and statements about self or driving habits. The latter includes any text that contains a reference to, or description of a woman. They are frequently a replication of mental, physical or emotional response to desire they experience throughout their life. The analysis reveals that vehicle graffiti authors are obviously more engaged in talking about themselves, their families or their cars and most especially to “a woman” because mostly drivers in Bontoc are men.

For the owners, the depictions of every inscription in their vehicles are mainly encounters and delights that imply personal expressions of appreciations and recognitions personally expressed through connotative statements, romantic statements, titles and lines from favourite songs, western icons, and Zodiac signs. It is becoming obvious that graffiti provide the owners with the audacity to clearly acknowledge their love, spirits, and moods.

It is apparent also that the names inscribed in the vehicles function for the purpose of self-identification. Yet, some of the names like the names of their family members, indigenous names, and names of their old ancestors are used to express the owner’s source of inspiration and encouragement as well as aspirations. The names of their children and wives, pictures of their grandparents with the town of Bontoc as background are inscribed and printed mostly in front of some tricycles.

There are also expressions of identity through naming other people with a title giving themselves identified names/titles besides their actual names. This is a replication of recognition where the drivers become popularly known by the names they inscribe on their vehicles. Some of the target drivers added that the names inscribed on their tricycles serve different purposes which include easy identification by their colleagues and customers, artistic effect, and security purposes to mark their vehicles against theft. Samples of collected graffiti under this domain include *Table 3* below with its sub-themes:

a. Character Expressions

Table 4: Examples of self- identity expression through naming other people with a title

No.	Expressions of self- identity through naming other people with a title
16	Ifuntok Dreamer
17	Keren Pastolero
18	Knight Hunter

When looking closer at the expressions collected under the identity of the “other” sub-theme, a masculine voice speaks about the “other” (women) who are represented as objects of sex and as victims (No. 19, 20, 21 & 23). Male writers (drivers) treat females in their writing in a humiliating manner that is portrayed through the choice of words they use: they call woman as

“baby” instead of the real name. The subject “other” represents a woman in a humble state suggesting lowliness to men, more or less, becoming lifeless objects in the graffiti inscription. Male graffitists take the roles of sexual attackers toward females and do not show any sign of understanding in their writing as expressed in No. 23.

Table 5: Examples of identity of the “other” expression

No.	Identity of the “other”
19	Sexy libre, Ang Chubby Doble [If you Sexy, free fare, if you are a Chubby one-double fare]
20	Basta Ex- Libre! [If you are my ex-girlfriend, you will have free fare]
21	Shabong hi bahong [flower of Bahong-a place in Benguet where flower usually blooms]
22	Labeth! Kool ka lang. [Labeth, just keep cool!]
23	Dalaga na malasing, buntis kung magising [A drunkard lady usually wakes up pregnant]
24	Napateg ka ! gayyem! [You are so tough! My friend]

Culturally, the *Igorot* people are socially oriented who possess a close-family ties culture. They have important kinship links, family bonds and social connections as expressed below.

Table 6: Examples of Indigenous names, names of past ancestors, names of family members expression

No.	Indigenous names, names of past ancestors, names of family members
25	Tudlong Family
26	Lawagan family
27	Alamay-Magdas
28	Bedey family! Katas ng eskwatras.

b. Self - car Identity Expressions

Graffitists about self or car expressions used lexical items like the collected inscriptions below which draw a very positive image of themselves as dedicated, faithful, respectful, united, etc. like (no. 29 and no. 35), for instance, it stresses that the driver’s duty and obligation to his family to bring home added profits would come first. Secondly, it would be his obligation to his wife. The inscription evidently replicates the impression of “macho” image which has influenced the “*Ifuntok*” society and its conduct of women.

Table 7: Examples of Self-car expressions

No.	Self-car identity Expressions
29	Pasahero sa umaga, misis sa gabi
30	Bontoc-Leseb Team
31	Basta Driver, Sweet Lover
32	My volvo
33	Pasadatayo@Bontoc.com.ph
34	The Original
35	The lover - driver

c. Personal expressions of appreciations and recognitions

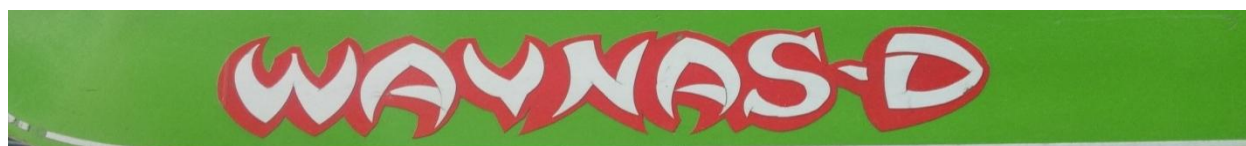
Some samples of personal expressions of appreciations and recognitions focus an endeavour to share individual experiences, direct conditions of the family, root of their vehicles, communal reflections as well as some noteworthy proceedings that impacted on their lives through their resource capital like (no. 36, 37, 39, & 51), for example, are inscriptions that clearly reflect the truth that “*Ifuntoks*” are hardworking and responsible folks who value their wages for the sake of the family. Figuratively, their usage of these inscriptions usually found on tricycles in Bontoc can be seen as a representation of an elevated socio-economic status of the family. The tricycle has become a necessity and a status symbol to the lower working class in the local town of Bontoc and it directs messages about the “type of cultural capital a person has” as Calyd (2017) mentioned.

Table 8: Examples of Personal Expressions of Appreciations and Recognitions expressions

No.	Personal Expressions of Appreciations and Recognitions
36	A little kindness makes a big difference
37	Katas ng Saudi, Katas ng Hongkong, Katas ng Abroad [Fruits from abroad]
38	Try to do what is necessary, next do what is possible, suddenly you are doing the impossible
39	The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams
40	Life is hard because we see the obstacles not the goals
41	Its hard 2 go on w/ d new unlez ur over w/ ur past
42	Choking hazard! Sumya Ka. [Good for you]
43	Shadap! And drive. Don't talk too much [Shut up!]
44	Puro kayo katas, Ako puro Utang [You all speak about progress, me always my obligation]
45	Tumaktak ka! Overtaking! Overacting! [You are a disturbance, overtaking! Overacting]
46	Ang hanap ko'y pera, hindi karera. [I am looking for money, not a race.]
46	Kitam Padli [Look out My Friend!]
48	Umuna ka! Sabali papanak [Go First, I'm on another way.]
49	Pakapi kat man! [Can we have coffee now?]
50	Mamam Anen! [Your "momma" anen – A colloquial expression]
51	Layad Ama ken dakami ay an-ak na. [This is the love for us came from our father]

d. Song titles and lines and zodiac signs

Graffiti inscriptions under this sub-theme reveal a reflection of the contemporary Bontok society. No inscription cites the name of a local artist popular among the "Igorots". Dominant inscriptions are titles of western songs; particularly country music; lines from favourite western songs; and even their zodiac signs. These inscriptions mirror a modern Bontok youth trend and the Western media inspiration in the local community as what the figure below illustrates:

**Figure 3:** A local title of an adapted song "Why Not Me".

The song "Waynas-D" (*Figure 5*) proves the fact that it became a customary to every driver that titles of songs are present in their vehicles. Most of them are country songs from different walks of life as reflected on the table below.

Table 9: Examples of Song titles and lines and zodiac signsexpressions

No.	Titles and lines from songs
52	Teach your children well
53	Silver Wings
54	The Gift
55	Thank you for Loving Me
	On Zodiac Signs
56	Taurus
57	Sagittarius
58	Pisces
59	Scorpio
60	Libra

The above inscriptions, language serves the function of self-identity and expression of aspirations and recognitions

3. Community, Moral, and Humorous Expressions

Table10: Total No. of samples for Community, Moral, and Humorous Expressions and its language usage

No.	Discourse Domains	Language	No. of samples
3	Community, Moral, Humorous Expressions	English	7
		Bontok	5
		Kankanaey	1
		Ilocano	1
		Tagalog	5
		Lang. Admixture	28
SUB-TOTAL			33
TOTAL No. of Samples			158

There are graffiti on community, moral, and humorous expressions under this discourse domain. They are observed on a creative way of publicly displaying morals of satisfaction, friendship, and understanding as well as humorous to give amusement to the public. The inscriptions expressed were much focused on the descriptions of the Bontok community who are well-known for their satisfaction, friendship, and understanding and holding a boundless sense of responsibility towards with the community. They are very proud of what they have, their values and traditions, as one Bontok tribe. They are loyal to being “*Ifuntok*” which the community is known for as a tribal place by expressing their devotion to their beloved community. It is very superficial that a countless sum of consideration is being paid to the place “*Bontoc, Ili ay Kalalaychan* (Bontoc, A Well-loved Place)” this is because most tricycle owners are purely residents of Bontoc. Their fascination to the place helps them express their commonality to their hometown. Positive description on one’s hometown in general is a basis for endorsing principles, opinions, and beliefs and evolving the Bontoc community is a symbol representing how magnificent the town regarding tourism, and others. Another positive description expressed under this domain is the place’s colloquial expression on a community identity.

Table 11: Examples of Community Expressions

No.	Community Expressions
61	Caluttit Ride
62	Bokhag- owen mayna
63	BontoKISS
64	Ooops! Icheyjey on board
65	Ad Samoki, Waday Og-ogfo.
66	Ibanga-an, Ifoyayeng, Isamoki

A moral expression is a topic that receives very little attention from the inscriptions in public transportations. However, some moral inscriptions found in the graffiti collected for this study mostly concern pieces of advice, a common belief among the “*Ifuntoks*”. Most writers produce moral graffiti in poems that is well-rhymed and reveal a fine selection of words. Moral graffiti, however, is found in some tricycles and are written in admixture languages. Since most owners of the tricycles come from Bontoc, Mountain Province, they might prefer to cite proverbial advices and vernacular moral verses in local tongue. The presence of proverbial inscriptions suggests that writers view graffiti as educational and use graffiti to support vernacular proverbs instructions. Mr. Carino gave a clarification to answer why moral or proverbial ideas, in Bontok society, are conveyed through poetry, “*Ifuntoks*” are rhymers by habit and that Bontok people has long used poetry as vehicles of thoughts that are easier to recite, remember or sing. (*Interview by Fagsao, Caluttit, Bontoc, Mt. Province, May 17, 2018*).

Table 12: Examples Moral Expressions

		Moral Expressions
67	Anus La-eng!	[Be patient]
68	Ayyat ti pamilya. Nangnangruna	[Love of a family, comes first]
69	Adim kwentaen amin nan rigat.	[Do not count on hardships]
70	Nu waday anus mu, Waday gaget ko.	[If you have patience, I have industry]
71	Mag ST tayo, SIPAG at TYAGA!	[Let us ST, Industry and patience]

Graffiti cannot be analysed just as a text only without looking its humorous perspective. Comical effects can be linguistically characterized. This is originality from the standards of spelling, punctuation, layout and typography. It momentarily encourages a great deal of written humour as explained in misprints, misspellings and much admixtures. It is intimately practicable and involved only in the written mode. In examples below graphical humour is felt when the text is explicitly looked at and not merely read out aloud. The examples below illustrate humour through the choice of the words in Figure 4.

Table 13: Examples of Humorous Expressions

		Humorous Expressions
72	If someone calls you ugly, have a good comeback and say “Excuse me, I am not a mirror.”	
73	Sa halagang piso, humanap ka ng kausap mo. [For only 1 peso, look for someone whom you can talk to.]	
74	Nu waday asok, waday watwat, nu waday watwat, waday ka	[If there is smoke, there is meat, if there is meat, you are there.]
75	Oops! Huwag masyadong itutok, puwet ko ay an.	[Oops don’t be too near, that is my buttocks.]
76	Automatic am-in ay!	[Everything is automatic.]
77	Basta driver, sweet lover	[A driver is always a great lover]
78	Basta Sexy, Sadot	[A sexy lady is always lazy]
79	Walang Forever, Brad	[There is no forever, brother]

**Figure 4:** An example of a humorous graffiti in a tricycle. [All sexy ladies are lazy].

Language Usage Variety and Discourse Domains on Public Spaces

The researchers have proposed two discourse domains to be used to classify graffiti on public spaces in Bontoc, Mountain Province: Unacceptable expressions and other expressions.

Table 14: Language usage variety and discourse domain on public spaces

No.	Discourse Domains	Language	No. of samples
1	Unacceptable Expressions	English	6
		Bontok	2
		Kankanaey	
		Ilocano	1
		Tagalog	
		Lang. comb.	
Total			9

4. Unacceptable Expressions

Inside the public toilets: There are few limitations on graffiti where the medium is free and needs no unrestrained procedures, it can be easily retrieved and it can offer unofficial chances to express any idea without fear and punishment. Sexual graffiti makes up a great amount from the entire data under this domain found in public toilets. Apparently inside the female’s toilets, graffiti noted and

collected are dialogues of insulting words of anger against their lovers and lover's girlfriends, thus; certain graffiti that can be read are merely a matter of exchanging insults; and also other graffiti inscriptions with are mostly concerned with romanticism and expressions of lovelorn feelings. Females, particularly in schools' toilets, find graffiti as their substitute means of communication and expression to express their thoughts and feelings they may not generally be able to share in public.

However, the male graffiti inscriptions from public toilets are comparable; of which the message's focus is always on the sexual conquest of the man-writer about women and delivers an interpretation of their sexual experience. Most graffiti use direct vernacular obscene words visualizing and expressing the subconscious thoughts and experiences of the writers giving a high interaction in this sub-category. Nevertheless, the response from other graffiti artists is normally antagonistic, where graffiti readers try to bully previous writers by bragging about their own sexual subjugations that are assumed to be better than those of others; some examples are found in Table 15 below.

In the graffiti inscriptions males wrote, women don the roles of visualized sexual cohorts, they are meek and willing to become a sexual channel for men or they accept the power of men in the form of sexual abuse. Some graffiti inside the other toilets are cell numbers that obviously constitutes a request for a text mate; nicknames; and emotional release markings of some important dates. Table 15 exhibits some examples of graffiti's taboo themes written mostly in English and some admixtures. These examples constitute a voice of personal, social, and cultural including particular main beliefs, such as expressing self-possession, sexuality, choice, and equality. They also mirror definite emotional reasons that motivate graffiti artists to write, such as depression, harassment, emotional, and bodily problems.

Table 15: Examples of Sexual Taboo Inscriptions

No.	Taboo Inscriptions/Graffiti
80	Supot (Uncircumcized)
81	Luyyop (Uncircumsized)
82	What is the size of your ____? Are you circumcised?
83	F*** Y**
84	You bitch! He's yours, he's all yours, I got my share.

The presence of taboo graffiti in verbal and non-verbal inscriptions around sexual topics found on toilet walls and doors in Table 15 are examples of how people consider taboo graffiti as their substitute form of sexual communication. Some connected graffiti read "What is the size of our ____? (no.82) Are you circumcised? (nos. 80-81), graffiti where males write to undermine other men who brag them over the size of their sexual organs and words such as the use of the F-word (no. 83) were spotted the walls. A number of inscriptions in this category confirm the previous theory that people use graffiti to converse and use graffiti to pursue what they need. Urinal walls thus become a notice board for people to express concerning sexual desires.

Graffiti written on the above mentioned are mostly short words, phrases, and sentences with intentions to express ideas, views, opinions, and feelings as well as the vast majority of obscene words or unacceptable expressions written in any corners of public urinals' walls. This may be done by the graffiti artists' purpose and target to allow the writings to be viewed clearly immediately upon sitting down on the toilet bowls or in front of the urinals most particularly and ostensibly in the men's toilet. The inscriptions collected inside these public toilets are impolite words or tabooed expressions which are "topics people generally avoid, as they are considered shocking, offensive, or embarrassing" (Al-Sadi and Hamdan, 2005). Graffiti artists use such inscriptions to contempt each other with violent abuses about themselves, counterparts, and even strangers. One sample is illustrated below in Figure 5:



Figure 5: an example of taboo inscription that exemplifies a local term for woman’s organ.

Graffiti, therefore, functions as a sexual release tool that also transmits the feelings of being blocked, assertiveness and the consciousness of impracticality into reality on the wall.

Table 16: Examples of Hostility and Insult Inscriptions

No.	Hostility and Insult Inscriptions/Graffiti
84	P*** (Vagina)
85	Lesbians F*** Y**
86	Gay Dudes

It is obvious that hostility is another common inscription found in some public spaces that are used as tools to hurl an obvious anger, hostility and insult to unknown individuals and treat other people as enemies and hated ones. Some of the graffiti are a simple illustration of locals’ opinions and attitudes towards various issues. They are mostly expression of dislike and disapproval, forswearing and dissatisfaction over various issues such as inscriptions that express aggressive behaviour seeking to dominate other genders. This signifies that locals find public spaces, particularly on building walls and surfaces, a haven to express their disapprovals to certain various issues. These findings are similar to other researches on graffiti that graffiti-writing is only the simplest and effective ways people or groups of persons to voice their political thoughts (Chaffee, 1990, Whitford, 1992) as cited from Al-Khawaldeh (2017).

In the schools’ premises

In some schools, statements of academic lectures are probably written to be used in exam time, while some of the graffiti poke fun at certain faculty members and others mock the school’s educational and administrative management and procedures. Solicited some MPSPC students regarding this matter, one proudly revealed:

These sorts of graffiti are our only and valuable sources to catch up with what we missed during the quizzes and assignments especially in some subjects where memorizations are what matters most. Inscribing some important objective terms on some walls of the classroom near the chairs we are seated on will only be the way for us to cope up with what we missed, since we know our grading system during final examinations in our school. (Interview with some student seated along the corridors at the 4th floor of the college. May 2018.)

Certain students expose disappointment and displeasure expressing negative feelings towards their school and teachers in their graffiti. They vent anger, frustration and question their school’s existence in their inscriptions. For example, they demand a more hands-on and more appropriate academic subjects, better services such as clean toilet, library with complete references or they need teachers who “listen” to their plights. Many inscriptions express anger and frustration over some teachers, grade results and question the educational ability of teachers. Some express concerns over rising tuition and other academic services fees.

One example of graffiti is illustrated below (Figure 6) which is a sign of hostility but with immature and unfinished scribbles that the graffitists seems to finish it with a word “Tuition” supposed to be. This graffiti was painted by those graffitists who intentionally expressing the “Free Tuition Fee” on the back walls of the college.

Figure 8: An example of a sign of hostility.



Another example is illustrated in Figure 6 below pointing out inscriptions on homosexuality where names of homosexuals (lesbians and gays) were given insulting aliases as clearly reflected.



Figure 6: An example of insulting inscriptions among homosexuals.

Though some of these graffiti are compelled by internal subjective feelings, such as adoration and affection, monotony and dullness, and uneasiness and worry, others are stirred by the objective to display antagonism towards these messages; thus, instead of deleting them, they intend to add to, or respond to the previously written scribbles as exemplified in the above figure.

5. Others

This discourse domain is where expressions inscribed that elicits a positive remark and perceived as an appeal of amusement to the public. They are mainly drawings of local icons, scribbles and etchings of facial expressions and body languages that represent the graffitiists' emotional feelings of certain issues. The following figures illustrate some examples of graffiti under this discourse domain.

The graffitiists use semiotic resources to communicate identities like what is illustrated on the following figures collected on the walls of public spaces and on tricycles. The graffiti chosen displayed symbolical significance in different aspects of those identities inscribed. Graffiti has changed into a pop culture existence creating a routine that remains satisfactory to the public.

Most of the wall graffiti along Bontoc's thoroughfares are somewhat clear and conventional because of the educational messages they deliver to outsiders. For example on the prevailing graffiti along the main road of Bontoc illustrated below.

Understanding discourse needs foregrounding of the content in order for participants to have a mutual understanding of the message of the graffiti. For example, on a black and white background (Figure 7 and Figure 8), there is an exclamation in English that reads "KEEP HONKING, I'M RELOADING" and "LIFE BEGINS AT 45".



Figure 7: Keep Honking, I'm Reloading



Figure 8: Life Begins At 45

Another graffiti inscribed in 2017 are cartoon drawings which are assumed and interpreted without even any words or languages. One is a replica of the popular Bontok personalities that was created by an artist named Michael Declarin, a Pangasinense and a member of an artist group “DUENDE” in Manila who was enthralled with the culture of Bontoc. (Figure 9). One news item on the interview with Declarin by Roger Sacyaten, he said “that he did it to serve as a memento for the public to eternally be grateful and remember the public figure”. (Baguio Herald, March 14, 2018).

The analysis of the wall displays that these graffiti endorse profound cultural and historical understanding and stereotypes similar to the analysis of Dahdal (2017). The artistic portraits represented an activist Igorot woman leader (left) as Solang (2017) wrote:

Mother Petra is an Igorot from mainit, Bontoc. Her decades of courageous and firm stand on economic livelihood and cultural-political issues has enriched and advanced the CPA program for genuine democracy and development. As leader, Mother Petra started in the Mainit women farmers’ opposition to commercial mining operations of the Mainit gold miners. This was also the time of opposition of the Chico dams, Cellophil, and Martial Law in the early Marcos dictatorship... Truly; Mother Petra is an activist Mother of the Cordillera.



Figure 9: Graffiti drawings of Bontoc’s important historical icons.

Another notable personality included is Atty. Alfredo Lamén, who served as Governor of Mountain Province, as a Congressman for the first District of Mountain Province and was a senatorial candidate in one of the national elections held in the country (Cheng & Bersamira, 1997). To quote an article from the “Echoes of Wisdom” published on September 27, 2013 (see www.echoesofwisdom.net):

“His name echoes up to this age... His notable jokes, handsome face, manly gestures and cowboy looks gained him the name, "local John Wayne" of the Cordillera. [He] react[ed] on Romulo's derogative statement about the Igorots. This challenged him to walk up to the congressional assembly in his native garb, in answer to Carlos P. Romulo's announcement that Igorots were not Filipinos. This regarded him as "the father of the Cordillera" but he said that such accolade wouldn't be necessary. He uttered in his humble remark that, "It is enough that you will remember me as one among you in this historical moment."

On the right side is The Honourable Board Member Alfonso Liswid Kiat-ong Sr. who is popular not only in Mountain Province, but also to the neighbouring provinces and tribes because of his involvements and resourcefulness in the accomplishment of enduring harmony and reconciliation in the capital town of Bontoc and Mountain Province as a whole decreasing the uprising problems, resolving tribal wars, avoiding and justifying the manifestation of crimes, and safeguarding public security. With the considerable focus on the metaphorical significance of using the “fatek” below (Figure 10), the researchers thus follow Kisofen (2018) who wrote:

Fatek to a local Bontoc term that generally refers to the traditional tattoos or the practice of traditional tattooing that can be traced back as the

existence of inter-village wars ... Traditionally; the practice of tattoo in Bontoc's cultural context is part of the rite of passage of male members. Hence, the Bontoc fatek cannot be fully appreciated and understood if it is separated from its ritual context of a man's rite of passage. It is a symbol that one has advanced from boyhood state to a higher level of manhood having proven his courage and strength in a tribe's head hunting expedition.

This became an identity marker, and was extended to other graffiti around the town.



Figure 10: A graffiti depicting Bontoc's culture

Communication Content and Purposes of Inscription

This section discusses the language variations as well as the lexical features and purposes detected in the data under examination. It is worthy to note that there is a difference in syntactic structures that ties with Halliday's functional grammar such as declarative structures; making statements, interrogative; asking questions and imperative such as commands. Wrong spellings, punctuation errors, wrong grammar and irregularity of lines and fonts are several of what were collected obviously inscribed by amateur artists. The short content words usually nouns, verbs, adjectives, and sometimes adverbs were mostly used by the graffiti artists that give the focus the readers' attention to analyse what the graffiti artists want to express.

The inscriptions written in sentences are expressed in different dialects in different forms. Some are statements, instructions, exclamations, and questions. This implies that the graffiti artists think of letting the observer or reader of these writings to have presumptions and analysis to their intended meanings. Some of them employ rhymes specifically from religious quotes, literary quotes, contemporary songs' lines and titles, admixture of humorous lines and local community expressions.

Language Variations

Following the data in the tables above, obviously English language dominates the graffiti inscriptions on public transportations and public spaces in Bontoc, Mountain Province where the inhabitants are predominantly "Ifuntoks". Aside from the English language, vernacular languages are also the secondary one indicating that there is still indigenous language maintenance within the locality. The samples with different admixtures languages (tagalog-English, vernacular-English, Tagalog-vernacular) common to the public transportation reflect the sociolinguistic reality of language interaction and collaboration to characterize communication in Bontoc, Mountain Province. Its usage and classification presents an invention in language use which may incline towards linguistic change in English that usually metamorphose to language birth similar to that of a pidginization as Merriam Webster defines it as "a language made from several languages combination of speakers using different languages to communicate".

Samples of inscriptions recorded are written along the tricycles' bumpers, fronts, and the sides as illustrated in the Figure 11 below with a mixture of English (Choking Hazard) and Bontok vernacular [Sumya Ka] you are Lucky. However, on most buses and jeeps, inscriptions were written on the interiors particularly near the driver's area, fronts, and backs except for the vans that nothing are inscribed along the posteriors of the car except only on its interiors.



Figure 11: An example of a language variation that mixes English and Bontok vernacular.

Words, lines, and expressions do vary on the way they are inscribed by the graffitiists where names of the owners are usually printed in front of the tricycles. There are also inscriptions of declaratives and interrogatives that convey personal experiences and “Ifuntok” colloquialisms. To the tricycles, buses, and jeeps, long lines of expressions are also commonly inscribed at the tricycle’s bumper that expresses broader themes on personal philosophies, biblical passages, titles of songs, Indigenous names of ancestors, among others.

The content and the numerous purposes the inscriptions serve were emphasized but it is benevolent to remind that collected graffiti analyses indicate that the religious contents and character/personal expressions are somewhat advanced. This echoes the religiosity that exemplifies Bontok society life pointing God’s power over their writings, at the same time endeavour to ward off any inevitable conditions barring their aims as drivers and operators of the public transportation.

Communication Content and Purposes

The graffiti discussed above have styles of odd writing which are: incomplete structures (short words), lexemes, admixture of dialects or languages, rhetorical questions, use of fragmented sentences, constrained spellings but colourful fonts, and anonymity element in graffiti text; and others.

Short Words Convention

To deliver a message, graffitiists use short words that are made up of a word but it is loaded with a clear and unique message to the readers. However, sentences are largely categorized by simple or summarized syntactic intricacy. Even though the sentences or words are incomplete or the content and functional words are short, momentary and invalid of grammatical and punctuation marks, the artists do not necessarily mind them as long as the intended messages were expressed as illustrated in Figure 12 below.



Figure 12: An example of inscriptions with the uses of words.

Lexemes

Cited from Oganda & Mugambi (2015) on Algeo and Pyles’ (1982) study espoused that coining new words are made by crafting, merging, shortening, combining or shifting using old words...” as illustrated in Figure 13 below.



Figure 13: Example of inscription with the use of lexemes.

Reserved Spelling

Graffitiists use several alternatives of spelling by changing how the words are constructed. Accordingly, there is no standard manner of spelling among their inscriptions and it is interesting to note that even a single word takes several modes of spelling giving readers difficulty to interpret them. From the examples, different symbols and words that do not follow the standard of spelling are observed as illustrated in Figures 14 below where some of the words were misspelled.



Figure 14: An example of inscription with the use of forced spelling.

Another sample is illustrated in Figure 15 below where the word “path” was misspelled as “bath”.



Figure 15: Another example of inscription where wrong spelling is obvious.

Secrecy Element in Graffiti Text

The graffiti is written with some intentions and reasons for the public to view and ponder but secrecy are usually common in the text writings because the writers always hide their identity especially on inscriptions with highly sensitive issues against other people. However, in some public transportation; the obvious graffiti on them needs a thorough examination of what were written and the intended audience as illustrated in Figure 16 below.



Figure 16: An example of inscription where anonymity is used.

Abbreviations, Contractions and Acronyms Usage

It is plentifully apparent that there is a wide and rich collection of such abbreviated words, contractions and even acronyms graffiti in Bontoc, Mountain Province for instance “your” becomes “ur”, “unless” is “unlez”, “past” to “pazt”, single digit (figures) can replace words, as in “to” for 2 and “with” for “w/”. It is apparent also that these forms of words are used for impressionistic purpose and of course for ease purposes as illustrated in Figure 17 below.



Figure 17: An example of an inscription using abbreviations, contractions and acronyms.

In general, the study’s findings can meaningfully add to researches on discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and linguistics survey by means of giving a comprehensive investigation of linguistic usage in the Bontok community. This paper is estimated to be cherished with learning settings as the results and conclusions may not only be addressed to the MPSPC BSED-English students, but also to a wider audience like teachers who could collaborate, bearing in mind the results to build a favourable and peaceable learning environment and in the long run improve one’s performance.

The examination of the graffiti collected highlights that English usage of locals in this capital town of Mountain Province adds more to the language’s function in attending to the numerous needs and purposes of the “Ifuntoks” in the Bontok society. It also demonstrates how the Bontok society influences language and how language is influenced by their dominant culture; the several usages of language in the Bontok community often lead to its further development as seen in the classification of admixture of languages, coinages, and rhetorical questions, among others as mentioned above.

Interrogative and Imperative Structures Usage

In several inscriptions on tricycles, as illustrated in Figure 18 below, there are communicative discourses that obligate a response.



Figure 18: The use of interrogative structures.

Pragmatic Politeness Usage

Cited by Dahdal (2017) in Brown and Levinson's (1987) study, pragmatic concepts of politeness is observed that according to their analysis, this is a sign of optimistic politeness showing awareness of speakers or writers' feelings of their readers by being courteous and respectful. Graffitiists should impose and show acceptance, sharing and treatment as a member of the group or situation. A worthy example of this notion is illustrated in Figure 19 below implying that everyone is welcome to ride on the vehicle.



Figure 19: An example of using pragmatic politeness.

Conclusions

Graffiti in general is a means of communication that give voice to groups of society. As this study has shown, public transportation and public spaces graffiti are not merely a reflection of individuals' thoughts and feelings, but are in themselves a social practice as well as a product of the practices of various societies. This study has attempted to survey the communicative functions and the linguistics features of graffiti written on public transportations and public spaces from a corpus-based approach adopting Fairlough's Discourse Analysis Approach, Braun & Clarke's Thematic Analysis Approach and Halliday's SFG. The study shows that graffiti are used as an archetypal way of human communication among the "Ifuntoks" voicing out their feelings, ideas, and attitudes towards certain spiritual, social and personal concerns using personal styles reflecting their thoughtful issues. They can be observed as a reflection of some of their underlying beliefs and a greatly resourceful, encouraging medium for the Bontok people to explore their socio-cultural roots, sustain their identities, and encourage their ideas they believe in. Graffiti also mirror and reflect the remains of dominant beliefs in the Bontok society.

Through running a qualitative analysis of public transportations and public spaces graffiti, the study showed that with regard to thematic classification, the majority of vehicle graffiti lie in the character/ personal expressions discourse domain. The sweeping majority of character/personal expressions show how such discourse genre reflects personal and social power relations among the Bontok society. It is also shown from the analysis that expressions of the self are the dominant one. However in the data analysis under the public spaces discourse domains, two contradicting expressions were drawn: positive expressions were inscribed under the "other" discourse domain that elicits a positive remark and perceived as an appeal of amusement to the public in the forms of non-verbal graffiti. As for the negative expressions, they are characterized with protests that carry criticisms against the local government which is dominant under the unacceptable expressions discourse domain where graffitiists use inscriptions to scorn one another with violent insults about people.

On the inscriptions' content and purposes, it showed evidences that the graffiti collected and analysed have unique and peculiar styles of writing which are: incomplete structures (short words), lexemes, admixture of dialects or languages, rhetorical questions, usage of fragmented sentences,

constrained spellings but colourful fonts, and anonymity element in graffiti text, and others. The study showed that public transportations and public spaces graffiti should not be regarded only as a platform of communication for the social groups; but, rather proven to be an on-going discourse that is the product of various societies that continuously influences, and will be influenced by them.

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