

WRITING ON TENTS AND CARAVANS IN AL-ZAATARI SYRIAN REFUGEE CAMP OF MAFRAQ, JORDAN: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Article History: Received on 18th July 2019, Revised on 29th August 2019, Published on 29th September 2019

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the sociolinguistic functions expressed by the written messages on the tents and caravans' surfaces in Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan from a sociolinguistic perspective. The study also attempts to find out the relationship between patriotism and graffiti writing in the refugee camp of Mafraq, particularly how the young male refugees practice graffiti writing to express their sense of patriotism towards their homeland, Syria.

Methodology: To achieve the study objective, the researcher collected a set of (144) messages written on the tents and caravans' surfaces of the camp. Content analysis and semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data has been carefully analyzed, classified regarding the sociolinguistic messages and in-depth discussed. A graffiti analysis can be an important means of understanding the linguistic, cultural and social milieu of a community.

Main Findings: The study concludes that graffiti writing on the camp's tents and caravans is functional and a universal phenomenon reflecting ideology. The sociolinguistic function of expressing patriotism and homesickness towards Syria ranked first with a percentage of (80.7%). Tagging is mainly the most common form of graffiti writing and sometimes coupled with drawings. The word Syria is frequently used on most conceivable surfaces of the camp indicating patriotism and longing to their homeland, digs deep into the values and norms of the Jordanian society. To reveal the cultural specificity of such a social, psychological and linguistic phenomenon.

Implications of this study: This paper contributes to the study of sociolinguistics by examining the use of language in the community, norms, and values of the society. It also contributes to other linguistic disciplines such as socio-pragmatics, discourse analysis, and stylistics by analyzing peoples' writing on several surfaces.

Novelty: No studies were conducted on writing on tents and caravans of Al-Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq even though this widespread phenomenon outspreads the surfaces of the camp. This study thus attempts to fill this gap in sociolinguistics.

Keywords: *sociolinguistic function, graffiti, messages, refugee camp, tents, caravans.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing on walls and any conceivable surfaces is a common term of graffiti indicating many things to several individuals. Little research has tackled this issue from a sociolinguistic perspective despite the fact that it is abundant everywhere in the world and in camps, particularly, inciting many responses. Writing on walls is presently increasing among the young camp dwellers in Jordan, especially at Zaatari Syrian Camp of Mafraq, Jordan. [Newall \(1987:40\)](#) argues that writing on public surfaces provides an opportunity for graffitiists to express their feelings, thoughts, views, and dreams and communicate victory. As such, writing in camps' surfaces provides the camps' refugees a vent to express their feelings, views, and thoughts freely. Writing on surfaces also inspires the dwellers to make "little scratching" on different surfaces that they do not usually share with others even with their relatives (Bartholome and Snyder, 2004). Writing on surfaces is deemed as "freedom of expression", especially graffitiists do not write their names (Tracy 2005, p.22). Writing on surfaces offers a worthy understanding of the overall parts of the public conveying different sociolinguistic messages. [Luna \(1987:73\)](#) states that graffiti writing on several surfaces covers insightful communal, emotional, and artistic information commendable of thoughtful consideration. Writing on surfaces as a cultural phenomenon reflecting language symbols and images in an artistic way ([Durmuller 1988: 1](#)).

Writing on surfaces is an ancient occurrence and digs deep in history which means that it cannot easily disappear by the process of time. [Dennant \(1997:1\)](#) emphasizes this idea assuring that it refers back to the pre-historic time. On the other hand, it can be regarded as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that indicates language variation and expressing the relationship between language and society through the expressed sociolinguistic messages practiced by people on every conceivable surface.

The researcher has worked in only one camp, i.e. -Zaatari Camp of Mafraq since it is the first and the most densely- populated Syrian camp in Jordan. The other four Syrian camps are as follows: Rukban refugee camp, Mrajeeb refugee camp, Azraq refugee camp, and Hadallat refugee camp.

Writing on tents and caravans is part and parcel of the study questions that seek to answer. The phenomenon of frequent writing on tents and caravans in the camp is a notable way of expressing several sociolinguistic messages; among which is

expressing patriotism and homesickness as well as loyalty towards their homeland, Syria. The abundant occurrence of writing on tents and caravans in the camp assists in enhancing the sociolinguistic functions of patriotism and loyalty to their homeland. The researcher believes that the young males aging from 12 to 18 do most of the writing on tents and caravans as a medium to spell out their sentiment of patriotism and loyalty towards their homeland, Syria. Although they feel that they are alienated physically, socially and psychologically from the Jordanian community, they hope that one day they return to their homeland. They have no other option except for living in the camp in the hope to return.

The phenomenon of writing on surfaces can be tackled through several methods. This paper is meant to investigate the sociolinguistic messages written on tents and caravans in Al-Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan. It also attempts to identify the relationship between patriotism and the refugee's sociolinguistic messages written on tents and caravans.

For clarity, the researcher reviewed some of the conducted studies characterizing the features of graffiti writing on surfaces both in camps and urban areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief History of Al-Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan

To understand the existing correlation between graffiti writing and Syrian patriotism in Al-Zaatari Syrian refugee camp of Mafraq, it is of great importance to get a general idea about the camp's history. First of all Syria and Jordan are both big sister and neighbor countries. They shared the same beliefs, culture, customs, and traditions.

Apart from several Palestine refugee camps across the country, since 1948 after the Nakba, the calamity of Palestine Al-Zaatari Syrian Camp is the biggest camp of Jordan, providing accommodation for the refugees of Syria in Mafraq. Over 90,000 refugees are now living in Jordan fleeing from the atrocity of war. The overwhelming majority of them are children and women who live in that camp. They live in tents and harsh circumstances. They suffer a lot from a low temperature in winter and scorching heat in summer since the area is desert. Despite the limited resources of Jordan, it is the only country that accommodates such a huge number of Syrian refugees not only in the Middle East but in the world. Jordan in cooperation with other humanitarian foundations provided hundreds of caravans and tents as accommodation for some of them.

Syrian refugees in Al -Zaatari Camp are deeply related to their homeland, despite the fact that they have been forcibly alienated from it in 2012. They still maintain their patriotic identity through writing on the walls of Al- Zaatari Camp. Very few refugees feel as if their Syrian and Jordanian identities are alike, whereas most of them feel as if their Syrian identity overcomes the latter. In Al- Zaatari Camp, this awareness arises as there is still a national atmosphere maintained in the camp and is expressed by writing on tents and caravans' surfaces.

Camp Graffiti

In the Arab setting, few research studies have been conducted on graffiti writing on camp surfaces in the Arab world in particular in Jordan. Practicing writing in camp surfaces supports the Syrian crisis and holds hope of return for the refugees in addition to the fact that it defuses their worries and tensions. For example, writing on surfaces manifested itself during the Palestine Intifada and Palestinian refugees practiced it expansively for political purposes and as a means of expression of their viewpoints.

In a study conducted by [Peteet \(199\)](#) on camps' graffiti entitled *Writing on the Walls: Graffiti of the Intifada*, he indicated that the use of graffiti in camps during the Palestinian Intifada was depicted as a medium to challenge the domination of the Israelis. He maintained that writing on the walls challenged the Israeli assertions to an investigation, establishing a glaring index of the Israeli state's failure to notice and monitor every place. Most writings were in favor of the Palestinians in confirming their resistance and served several sociolinguistic objectives. Their writing was extremely politicized and confirmed patriotism. In another study on camp graffiti, [Ramadan \(2009\)](#) stated that graffiti writing in a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon primarily included texts and pictures representing the Palestinian issue. He noticed that most of the writing heavily focused on patriotism as a sociolinguistic function. He also viewed that writing on walls was used to change the physical landscape so as to nationalize them. He continued that the landscape acted as an arena for the Palestinian parties to communicate with people to promote a sense of Palestinian identity and solidarity. In a related study, [Al-Haj Eid \(2007\)](#) asserted that most of the amount of writing practiced in camps' schools expressed a sociolinguistic function of patriotism towards Palestine than any other functions, which stood at 33.7 % of the total fourteen sociolinguistic functions of the study. In a similar study, [Watkins \(2009\)](#) examined the relationship between nationalism and graffiti writing in the refugee camps of Amman. She mainly observed how male graffitiists spell out their feelings of nationalism towards Palestine. The study showed that the writings of Palestinian nationalism mostly included the words "Palestine" and "Whidat", a football team name. A considerable number of the male boys expressed their loyalty to the host country, Jordan. They also expressed their feelings of loyalty towards Palestine. They practice drawings and writing on camps' walls to express their sentiments towards Palestine. The researcher attributes this allegiance to Jordan because they are the second and maybe the third generation of Al-Nakba, the

calamity of Palestine. They were born in Jordan, unlike the Syrian refugee youth who was born in Syria and still feel a sense of alienation from their homeland.

[Lehec \(2017\)](#) studied graffiti in Palestinian refugee camps and explained that camp dwellers consider themselves refugees from the 1948 Nakba and their freedom of movement is either denied or at the least controlled by Israel. Therefore, they resorted to graffiti as an act of resistance during the First Intifada. The study sought to discover the relationship between the specific urban structure of a refugee camp and graffiti. It used writing on walls to convey patriotic, religious and social messages in addition to promoting the Palestinian identity.

Urban graffiti

In the urban context, [Al-Rousan\(2005\)](#) studied writing in walls from a sociolinguistic perspective. He collected around (1187) texts from different Jordanian cities: Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Maan, Ajloun, and Mafraq. He classified the sentences into several sociolinguistic functions. After analyzing the corpus, he found out that writing in the walls of cities in Jordan is purely functional. The sociolinguistic functions were as follows: feelings and emotions, internal sensations, propaganda, loyalty and belonging, mass media admiration in addition to other functions. He indicated that the highest frequent sociolinguistic function was feelings and emotions representing 11.96% of the total amount of the collected texts. The study concluded that writing on walls though has some advantages; it has some advantages such as defacing the public and private properties and should be strictly monitored.

In the non-Arab setting, Mangeya (2014) considers writing on the walls as a distinctive social phenomenon in Zimbabwean urban areas. The study sample included three Zimbabwean urban areas and studied in-depth graffiti writing on several surfaces which included toilet walls and road signs. The research analyzed how graffiti writing can be employed for both pro-hegemonic and anti-hegemonic purposes. Graffiti writing in high schools and tertiary institutions emphasized a differential production of discourse on a gendered basis. Meanwhile, graffiti writing in female toilets expressed educational, health, traditional and religious messages which affirm male dominance. The writing also indicated a concern with female sexuality by colleague students by the discursive usages of social tags such as prostitute. Such tags were not found in the writing of male toilets which is more conservative than the females'.

[Frater \(2008\)](#) examined photos of artistic work done in the city of Barcelona, Spain. The pictures were implemented using spray-paint and colorful crayons. Most of the pictures were painted on the walls of the city. She stated that the overwhelming majority of the wall writing serves a function of popular propaganda. On the other hand, [Eguibar \(2009\)](#) scrutinized signs and posters written in the streets of Mexico City. He acknowledged that most of the graffiti written signs and posters were found in San Pablo del Monte and Puebla- Tlaxcala. It included the richest advertising street of Ignacio Zaragoza in that city. The graffiti writing expressed the cultural duality of Mexico. The signs guided the passers-by to a certain business, notifying clients about the goods or services provided by the business. The researcher concluded that the most interesting artistic work was implemented by professional and improvised sign painters, ([quoted in Al-Radaideh 2011](#)).

Finally, few studies have tackled writing on walls from a linguistic perspective in general and a sociolinguistic viewpoint, in particular, except for AL-Rousan's study referred to earlier. Furthermore, to the best knowledge of the researcher, very few studies have been conducted on writing on walls in the Arab countries so far. Also, no studies have been held either in the Arab or non-Arab countries on tents and caravans' surfaces in camps from a sociolinguistic perspective. To the best of the researcher's knowledge writing on tents and caravans of Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan from a sociolinguistic perspective has not been investigated so far.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates writing on tents and caravans' surfaces in Al- Zaatari Syrian Camp of Mafraq, Jordan from a sociolinguistic perspective in relation to the sociolinguistic messages. This research is considered a contribution to qualitative and quantitative studies in sociolinguistics. The method adopted in this research is mainly a descriptive study on writing on tents and caravans by the Syrian refugees themselves in Al- Zaatari Camp.

Statement of the Problem

The literature review showed that no studies were conducted on writing on tents and caravans of Al-Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq even though this widespread phenomenon outspreads the surfaces of the camp. Moreover, no study has examined this phenomenon from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. This study thus attempts to fill this gap in sociolinguistics.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to identify the sociolinguistic messages written on tents and caravans of Al-Zaatari Syrian Camp and their significance. It attempts to uncover the correlation between patriotism and graffiti writing in the camp. It studies the reasons

behind this linguistic phenomenon. It also sheds light on the social and psychological reasons for practicing this phenomenon. The research highlights the sociolinguistic messages and some of the distinctive characteristics of graffiti writing on walls.

Questions of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the sociolinguistic messages conveyed in the writing of the Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp?
2. What is the correlation between patriotism and graffiti writing in the camp?
3. Do the refugees of the camp feel patriotism towards Syria?
4. Are the graffitiists aware of what they wrote on the tents and caravans at Al- Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp?
5. What are the reasons behind their writing?

Research Significance

This study investigates the sociolinguistic messages written at Al- Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp. It is important because it is the first of its type in examining some of the sociolinguistic features marking the refugee dwellers' writing on tents and caravans. Moreover, the study draws its importance from the fact that it characterizes the appropriate understanding of the sociolinguistic messages. It also aspires to reveal the cultural specificity of such a social, psychological and linguistic phenomenon. It is used as a significant source of facts in revealing Syrian refugees' viewpoints, sentiments, and attitudes. The researcher believes that this study is of great importance since it reveals the sociolinguistic messages written in the camp.

Limitations of the Study

This study restricts itself to the study of the refugees' writing in Al- Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan from a sociolinguistic angle. It is limited to the refugees' writing on tents and caravans. Stickers and messages including swearwords sharply criticizing the Syrian regime have been excluded from the study. The researcher excluded using cameras due to the sensitivity of the topic and upon the request of the refugees.

Instruments of the Study

Instruments of writing are also included in the study such as aerosol spray- paint and by any means of writing such as flow masters, pens, pencils, chalk, crayons.

Data collection

The corpus of this study was collected from tents and caravans in Al- Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp of Mafraq, Jordan. The researcher along with the help of three colleagues meticulously collected the data. He repeatedly paid several visits to the camp. The researcher used a mobile phone, a notebook, a pen, and a pencil to collect the data. Total of (144) messages was collected from different tents and caravans. To achieve the objectives of the paper, the researcher conducted (30) semi-structured interviews with some of the camp dwellers: young males who practiced graffiti writing on the tents and caravans in addition to old people. The respondents were also given a questionnaire to fill in and their answers were recorded after having their consent.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data needed for the study, content analysis has been done on the study sample. The data were carefully classified and compared with reference to the sociolinguistic messages and their frequencies. They have also been calculated and then presented in tables. Then, the results were discussed and summarized.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sociolinguistic messages: Content Analysis

Sociolinguistic messages are considered as a reflection of ideology. They reflect the impact of the socio-political, religious and cultural values of the society's beliefs, ideas, and philosophy in addition to its national identity. More importantly, it controls the behavior of the society members. The corpus upon which the (144) sociolinguistic messages practiced on the tents and caravan surfaces of Al- Zaatari Syrian Camp were functional serving several sociolinguistic messages. The five functions were categorized and analyzed based on their occurrences in the study sample followed by illustrative examples. This answers the first question of the research. The five functions were summarized in tables according to their frequencies and percentages. They are as follows:

Expressing patriotism and homesickness

Patriotism and homesickness denote dedication and commitment towards a person or a place. They express excessive notions of love and admiration for the homeland. Patriots feel that they are deeply rooted-to their native country. [Horowitz \(1940\)](#)

confirms that people are devoted to their homeland since childhood which shapes the basis for future and everlasting commitment. Childhood and allegiance are intertwined. They are delighted with it and its accomplishments. According to Britannica Concise, patriotism means feeling of affection and commitment. It is love for the nation and being loyal to it. Meanwhile, homesickness indicates a sense of resentment due to being away from homeland ([Britannica Concise Encyclopedia 2008: online](#)). Both patriotism and homesickness express love and belonging to homeland, especial when a person is forcibly alienated from it. Therefore, the Syrian refugees are patriotic and they practice this type of writing because it gives them a chance to express their feelings and allegiance to their country. The refugees use graffiti as a medium to express their patriotism. This answers the second and third questions of the research. The Syrian identity is maintained in the camp's tents and caravans through writing patriotic and homesickness messages revealing their allegiance to their homeland. These sociolinguistic messages rank top and constitute (80.7%) of the total number of the collected messages. Some examples of patriotism and homesickness are as follows:

احبك يا شام-

I love you Sham (the Levant)

دمي سوري-

My blood is Syrian

وطني أين أنت لا استطيع الوصول إليك-

Where are you my homeland.....? I cannot reach you.

أه يا دمشق! لم يبقى إلا الدمع.....

Oh, Damascus! Nothing remains except for tears.....

Expressing hot anger

Hot anger refers to the person's emotion of annoyance and bitterness of life. This feeling of offense affects the vast majority of the camps' dwellers. They have become poor, helpless and infirm owing to the scourge of war raging in Syria. Their anger has turned out to a state of anxiety and pessimism.

Anger is a natural phenomenon that most of the Syrian refugees in the camp complain about bitterly due to the emotional and psychological situation that some refugees experience every day in the camp. More importantly, lots of them left some of their family members behind and fled to Jordan. Accordingly, some of the camp's dwellers practice this type of writing on the tents and caravans as a way to condemn the socio-political, economic and psychological condition they suffer from. They feel angry because they consider themselves to be living in a big prison camp and they are not allowed to leave it. They think that they are deprived of freedom like prisoners held in prison. [Hall \(1997\)](#), [Cronin\(1994\)](#) and [Gussak \(1997\)](#) asserted that people living in prisons write messages of anger and aggression due to the terrible conditions they live in. This sociolinguistic message stands for (17.3%) and ranks second. The following are explanatory examples.

بئس لخيمتي..... سأهدمها وأعود

What an evil my tent!..... I will destroy it and return.

شوفي حالنا يا شام

Look at our status thee Sham (Levant)!

صرنا لاجئين.....الله اكبر!

We have become refugees.....Allah (God) is the Greater!

راحت كرامتنا

Our dignity has gone away!

Condemning foreign and local policies

Foreign policies and local policies cannot be divorced from each other; they complement each other. Local policies are part and parcel of the foreign policies. [Padelford and Lincoln\(1977\)](#) define foreign policy as the main constituent of achieving the goals and interests of a nation. It has two functions: the first is to achieve its set goals and the second is to pressurize its national interests. Meanwhile, Gibson (1944:9) defines foreign policy as a comprehensive plan that heavily relies on awareness and skills so as to control the business of the country with the rest of the world. It also seeks to enhance and maintain the interests of the nation.

Here in the camp politics occupies people's minds due to the Syrian crisis that affects the area. Consequently, political issues still control their way of thinking. The foreign and local policies have an impact on the dwellers of the camp. This can be seen by covering most of the tents and caravans' surfaces of the camp. They strongly condemn foreign intervention in their country's affairs. [Zelinski \(1999:1\)](#) stated that people express their political thoughts through graffiti writing. Graffiti writing is used as a medium by people to express socio-political issues dominating their lives ([Al-Khawaldeh et al.2017](#)). The political messages conveyed through writing differ in terms of scope and meaning. This sociolinguistic function represents (16.7 %) of the total number of the collected corpus. The following examples illustrate this function.

سنعود يا روسيا وإيران إلى سوريا الحبيبة-

We shall return thee Russia and Iran to the beloved Syria.

فليسط الاستعمار.....وتحيا سوريا -

Colonialism should be wiped out.....and long live Syria!

أمننا تقتلنا.....حكومة وليست الأرض-

Our mother kills us.....the State not the land.

سوريا ليست كعكة..... -

Syria is not a piece of cake (to be distributed into portions)

Expressing basic needs of life

Refugees of the camp feel they are marginalized and they are in short of the basic needs of life. They suffer a lot in winter due to lack of heating system. Even though the Jordan government with its limited resources provides them with some oil and gas, the amount of supply does not suffice in winter. Children and elderly people cannot stand the cold weather of the camp in winter as it is located in the desert. In summer, they also suffer a lot from the scorching heat. Moreover, they suffer from unemployment as they are not allowed to work outside the camp. They also suffer from a low level of the education system. Therefore, they resorted to the tents and caravans' surfaces as a vent to speak out their essential needs. This function ranks fifth forms (9%) of the total amount of the data. They are as followings:

الجوع كافر-

Hunger is faithless

شوفي حالنا يا شام.....بلا عمل وبلا كرامة-

Look at our conditions thee Sham (Levant).....without work or dignity.

متنا من البرد.....يا حكومة-

Cold killed usthee government.

الهي نرجع لديرتنا.....الحر قتلنا

OH! My God we wish we could return to our village..... The heat killed us.

Expressing religious messages

[Encarta \(2009\)](#), defines religion as a holy commitment with what is believed to be a spiritual reality, such a worldly phenomenon is part and parcel of humanity based on man's culture, belief, and ideology. Consequently, language and religion are deeply integrated. Religion dominates peoples' lives. Writing various religious messages on tents and caravans' surfaces has become a notable phenomenon in the camp. These messages may include verses from the Holy Quran and Hadith (Prophet Mohammed's sayings) or expressions based on the tenets of Islam since the majority of the camp's dwellers are Muslims. Because the Syrian refugees are in trouble, they take refuge in Allah (God) as a shield to protect them and help them get rid of their miserable situation they suffering from. Accordingly, some delved into writing some religious messages on their tents and caravans. The findings of this research correspond to several researchers' results ([Farina, 2014](#); [Dombrowski, 2011](#); [El-Nashar & Nayef, 2016](#); [Onyango, 2016](#)) who confirm that graffiti writing serves different thematic functions among which are religious and political messages ([quoted in Al-Khawaldeh et al. 2017](#)). This sociolinguistic message constitutes 6.3% of the data. The following are expressive examples (See table 1)

الله كبير يا دمشق-

God (Allah) is the Greatest, Damascus.

ما إلنا غيرك يا الله-

We have nothing left but Allah

يا الهي ارحمنا-

Oh! My God (Allah)have mercy on us.

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله-

There is no power save in Allah

Table 1: Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions

No.	Functions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Expressing patriotism and homesickness	73	50.7%	1
2	Expressing hot anger	25	17.3%	2
3	Condemning foreign and local policies	24	16.7%	3
4	Expressing basic needs of life	13	9.0%	4
5	Expressing religious messages	9	6.3%	5
Total		144	100%	

Five sociolinguistic messages have been observed in the collected corpus. They are as follows in descending order as written in the tents and caravans' surfaces: expressing patriotism and homesickness (50.7%). Expressing hot anger (17.3%). Condemning foreign and local policies (16.7%). Expressing basic needs of life (9.0%). Expressing religious messages (6.3%).

As shown in Table (1), it is obvious that the most significant message in the collected data is expressing patriotism and homesickness. This common occurrence is due to the camp dwellers' allegiance and adherence to their country, Syria, though being long away from it for years and new generations were born. They take great pride in writing messages about their homeland. Expressing hot anger comes in the second rank due to the fact that their living in the camp is atrocious since they are living in miserable conditions compared to the type of life they used to have in Syria, though the Jordanian government in cooperation with international organizations strive to alleviate their anger and provide them with psycho-social support. The sociolinguistic message of condemning foreign and local policies is the third frequent one in the data. It is slightly similar to expressing hot anger. The refugees anxiously express their abhorrence of foreign intervention in their country, especially that of Iran and Russia. They also sharply criticized the local policies of the Syrian regime. Expressing the basic needs of life ranks fourth because they are in short of the bare necessities of life. The least common message is expressing religious messages. Most of the Syrian community members are religious and strongly believe and trust in Allah; so some resort to writing such religious messages in the hope Allah answers their prayers and they, one day, return to their country.

As can be seen from Table (2) and (3) below, the amount of patriotic graffiti writing according to the sociolinguistic messages outnumbers that of the non-patriotic graffiti writing based on the sociolinguistic messages. The former is the most prevalent one comprising (59%) percent of the total number of the collected corpus; meanwhile the latter forms (41%) of the examined data. Expressing patriotism and homesickness represents the most frequent sociolinguistic message. However, expressing hot anger is the least frequent one and ranks last of all the sociolinguistic messages (See table (3)).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of the patriotic and non- patriotic graffiti writing according to sociolinguistic messages.

No.	Sociolinguistic messages	Graffiti writing				Total	
		Patriotic		Non-patriotic			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Expressing patriotism and homesickness	73	100%	0	0%	73	100%
2	Expressing hot anger	1	4.%	24	96%	25	100%
3	Condemning foreign and national policies	5	20.8%	19	79.2%	24	100%
4	Expressing basic necessities of life	3	23%	10	77%	13	100%
5	Expressing religious messages	3	33.3%	6	66.7%	9	100%
	Total	85	59%	59	41. %	144	100%

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of sociolinguistic messages according to patriotism.

Sociolinguistic messages					
Patriotic Syrian		Non-patriotic Syrian		Total	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
85	59%	59	41. %	144	100%

In the course of study, the researcher found lots of messages coupled with drawings scribbled with chalk, spray paint and flow masters. Such drawings were classified into Syrian graffiti and non-Syrian graffiti as shown below in Table (4).

Table 4: Analysis of Drawings Based on Syrian and non-Syrian Graffiti Subject

Drawing	Subject of message	Syrian drawing	Non-Syrian graffiti drawing	Frequency
1 Flag	Syrian flag	17	1	18
2 Map	Map of Syria	10	1	11
3 Heart	Love of Syria	12	2	14
4 Mosque & Crescent	Religious messages	0	7	7
5 Miscellaneous	Environmental & signature messages	0	5	5
Total:		39	16	55
Percentage:		70.9%	29.1%	100%

The tents and caravans' surfaces included a total of (55) Syrian and non-Syrian graffiti messages coupled with drawings. It is interesting to note that Syrian graffiti messages, constituting (70.9%) were the most frequent in the collected drawings. The most prevalent type of Syrian message produced by the refugees was tagging. A tag typically incorporates the taggers' names or the initials of their names, drawing, signature, symbols, a word or any different element that the graffitist or tagger deems essential to them. Graffitists deliberately practice their tags on different surfaces too. This answers the fourth question of the research. The most frequent occurrence of graffiti in the refugee camps concerning words and /or drawings were tagging. The tag was used to highly emphasize the sociolinguistic message of patriotism and homesickness. The vast majority of drawings in the camp included either the word "Syria" or cities of Syria. Such words are openly scrawled and graffitists do not regard it as an act of defacement of property. On the contrary, they consider it a legitimate way to denote their patriotism and longing to their country.

This may be ascribed to the fact that the dwellers of the camp are very patriotic and are still enthusiastically connected to their homeland. Most of the drawings were strongly related to Syrian patriotism. Meanwhile, there are several non-Syrian drawings that have nothing to do with Syria and patriotism. Perhaps, they were scrawled in hastily with no specific theme such as the miscellaneous drawings of birds, animals, signatures, and flowers which cannot be accounted for. The drawing of flags of Syria typically with the word "Syria" inside it ranked first and it seemed with more occurrences than any other drawings: map, heart, mosque, and crescent. It additionally denotes a sense of pride, boastfulness, and patriotism to their country.

The camp's refugees wrote a considerable number of words, most of them were about Syria. The predominant word written on the surfaces incorporated the word Syria. By far this predominant word highly emphasizes that the Syrian refugees' patriotism lies at the core of their common sense of character (see Table (5)).

Table 5: Most frequent Words were written by the Camp's Refugees

Text	Frequency
1 Syria	20
2 Sham(Levant)	7
3 Damascus	5
4 Halab(Aleppo)	4
5 Homs	3
6 Daraa	3

Quantitative analysis of semi-structured Interviews

The researcher conducted twenty-five semi-structured interviews. All of the interviewees are Syrian refugees living in the camp: Ten elderly men and fifteen young male Syrian refugees because female refugees severely refused to be interviewed. 15 male participants are in school (from the sixth to the twelfth grades). The elderly men and schoolboys requested that their names be kept anonymous. An interview schedule form comprising fourteen questions was designed and the respondents' answers were filled in a special interview template consisting of the questions, responses, frequencies, and percentages. The questions focused on the motives behind practicing this phenomenon. The interviews revealed that all of the respondents wish they could return to Syria and are proud of their Syrian identity. All of them take great pride in their homeland. When asked about whether they have loyalty to the camp and /or their homeland, none of the respondents expressed loyalty to the camp. This disagrees with [Watkins'\(Ibid: 2009:P32\)](#) study of the refugee camps of Amman where refugees expressed their allegiance to Jordan in addition to their homeland of origin Palestine. They expressed their anger towards living in the camp, but they highly appreciated Jordan's efforts in accommodating them and providing them with food and shelter in conjunction with other international communities. However, the Syrian refugees remain loyal to their homeland, Syria and this shows that they are not loyal to the camp. With regard to the motivation behind graffiti writing, most of the respondents confirmed that graffitiists practiced writing such messages and drawings because they hold hope to return to Syria in the future and it is the only way by which they indirectly express patriotism and loyalty towards their country. Others stated that such messages and drawings would make their homeland, Syria, a memorable country for them. One of the elderly men added that it gave him a sense of nostalgia for Syria when he viewed the messages and drawings of Syria. The elderly men attributed it to patriotic reasons and they see it as a vent to express their patriotism and loyalty to their country. Of all respondents, twelve interviewees considered it as a legitimate way. Based on this study, the most prevalent sociolinguistic message was patriotism and loyalty. This study agrees with a study conducted by [Watkins \(Ibid: 2009:P31\)](#) on patriotism in the Palestinian refugee camps of Amman. Concerning the interviewees' feelings towards seeing graffiti in the camp, twenty-five respondents believed that they felt loyalty to Syria. They are pleased with what was written on their tents and caravans since this act reminds them of their homeland, especially when the messages are patriotic since they take pride in their Syrian identity. With regard to the content of the sociolinguistic messages and drawings, the enormous majority of the interviewees responded that they depicted an array of political, religious and patriotic messages. Based on the above mentioned results, none of the sociolinguistic messages express love, sports, songs, humor or jokes, leaving memoirs, wisdom, warnings or propaganda as expressed in some Palestinian camps of Jordan as mentioned in [AL- HajEid \(2007\)](#), [Al-Rousan \(2005\)](#) and [Watkins' \(2009\)](#) studies. This is attributed to the reason that the refugees are still desperately experiencing one of the most awful catastrophes in their lives. There is no space for pleasure and happiness. They feel a deep pang of agony and are dreadfully holding hope for peace. They are the generation of calamity, unlike the Palestinian refugees of Jordan who maybe the second or third generation of the calamity. The Syrian refugees still experience the first shock of the war atrocity raging in their country.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that the phenomenon of writing on the tents and caravans' surfaces in the camp is a universal phenomenon and is a reflection of ideology. It is functional and serves five sociolinguistic messages: expressing patriotism and homesickness, hot anger, condemning foreign and local policies, basic needs of life in addition to religious messages. Communicating patriotic and homesickness messages as a sociolinguistic function towards the Syrian refugees' homeland were the most prevalent message. Most of the refugees professed that they do purposefully and they are aware of what they are practicing. They have no means except for writing on the surfaces to express their patriotism and homesickness. It is a medium to defuse their apprehensions and express their feelings of loyalty towards their homeland. Another major sociolinguistic message was communicating anger followed by condemning foreign and local policies. This effortlessly encapsulates how writing on the camp's tents and caravans is used to create an atmosphere of blind allegiance and to perpetuate their national identity though they are physically detached from their country. They will relentlessly carry on a profound patriotism and longing to Syria until they are repatriated. Thus, some consider it as a legal act since it is practiced peacefully and not violently. It is worth mentioning that the refugees do not feel loyal to the camp. They consider it as a burden due to the miserable conditions they live in, though they are much obliged to the Jordanian government for accommodating them.

Tagging was the most common type of graffiti writing in the camp in terms of drawings and single words. It almost included the word Syria and other cities of their country in addition to the drawing of the map of Syria as tags. They used the tags to denote the sense of patriotism and longing to their homeland. It denotes as if "I am a Syrian refugee holding hope to return home". It is unlikely to wander in the camp without seeing the word Syria or other cities of the country. The tents and caravans are brimmed with such words. Taggers find tagging a way to highly emphasize their patriotic messages as a sociolinguistic function.

The Syrian identity was maintained in the camp's surfaces to draw hopes of return. National identity is more fundamental as an indispensable constituent holding the social baric of the community and is shared by all individuals of the society. The most substantial part of a nation is not its physical existence, but its identity (Anderson (1991). The Jordanian government does not prevent taggers the Syrian refugees living in the camp to spell out their sense of patriotism and homesickness either verbally or in any way they deem suitable. Hence, the refugees resort to writing and drawing on tents and caravans as an escape to express their allegiance, beliefs, and feelings. Despite the widespread use of technology such as Facebook, people still keep on writing on the walls (Matthews, Speers and Ball, 2012).

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Appendix

A-Introductory questions

- How are you?
- How old are you?
- Are you a camp dweller? How long have you been here?
- How long have you been living in the camp?
- Are you a student? Which grade (only for young boys)?
- Do you like living in the camp? Why (not)?
- Do you like Syria?
- Do you like to return to Syria?



B. Graffiti –based questions

- What do you think of the graffiti in the camp?
- Do you feel loyal to the camp?
- Why do you practice graffiti in the camp?
- How do you feel when seeing messages and drawings covering the tents and caravans?
- What content do the messages and drawings in the camp include?
- Do you think this action is legal?