

## DESK GRAFFITI COHESION STRATEGIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARIES

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### **Abstract**

*This paper uses the Halliday and Hasan model of cohesion to study graffiti at the University of Nairobi. The paper argues that although many studies have been undertaken on graffiti at various universities, most of them have focused on toilet graffiti and on non-cohesive strategies and so there is need to turn to library desk graffiti as well and its cohesion styles. Although the study also notes that other cohesion types are present in the University of Nairobi graffiti data, it focuses only on lexical cohesion which seems to be the most salient and pronounced. Further, few studies on graffiti have focused on cohesion that involves multiple writers of a text and the challenges of establishing a reference process and communication of meaning and hanging together of elements in a text. This study reveals a heavy presence of lexical cohesion with all the types of lexical cohesion viz reiteration that subsumes, repetition, synonymy, and hyponymy and collocation that subsumes antonymy. It is argued in this paper that most lexical cohesion at the University of Nairobi desk graffiti tends to exhibit a lot of repetition that is largely non co-referential. This repetition is used to guide which way the discussion goes and to reinforce the topic of discussion and even signal change of topic. By and large there is a heavy presence of synonymy and hyponymy with antonymy being minimal. Nominal relationships seem more pronounced with a small percentage of it being verbal.*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Most research on graffiti has largely focused on toilet graffiti and on graffiti on walls of Buildings (Yieke 2003, Nwoye 1993, Muturi 2012, Abbel and Buckley 1977). An even growing literature on graffiti has been written on gates of buildings, in vehicles, road cliffs and on tree trunks (Onchari, 2010, Basthomi, 2007; Kinyati, 2002). Graffiti can be in many forms like in drawings, writings, paintings or scratching. This paper focuses mainly on writings in college environment. Graffiti could be written by people of all ages. This work focuses more on writers of youthful ages because they are the ones most likely to be found in colleges and universities. It must, however, be admitted that expansion of education in Kenya after the inception of Module Two programs in universities in the late 90's, has seen learners of all ages join universities and who could, like their youthful counterparts, engage in the graffiti art of writing. The people who write graffiti normally do so privately and the writers are anonymous. This is because of the nature of issues graffiti writing engages. In fact, universally, graffiti is generally treated as illegal by most authorities since most of the graffiti is against establishments; government, church, school, ethnic establishments etc. Most graffiti writers criticize establishments regarding how they are run and generally managed see Bushnell (1990). Little research has focused on desk graffiti which is growing by the day in many universities in Kenya and the world over. Many university students would like to express some opinion on matters of love, politics, academics, ethnic issues etc. However, students seldom get the opportunity to openly talk about these issues in universities where there is a strong sense of surveillance on student activity. Graffiti therefore remains their main avenue of exchanging their unmonitored and unbridled standpoints and views on issues that seem contentious at universities.

These issues seem to disturb them and they are seeking answers and opinion by engaging in dialogue with their colleagues.

This paper discusses desk graffiti with the aim of discovering the dominant cohesion patterns, what motivates the cohesion patterns and how they account for textuality, meaning expression and general cohesion of graffiti texts. In this paper we focus on lexical cohesion which seems most salient in the data we have collected from the University of Nairobi libraries. This is a type of cohesion that largely has lexical relationships but can also to some degree be semantic in regard to lexical relationships that are co-reference in character.

The graffiti data from the university of Nairobi libraries tends to have general characteristics. Like most graffiti studied in the world, it tends to focus on issues of sex, love, money, music, drugs, politics and matters of employment (Onchiri 2010, Muturi 2012). However, this graffiti also focuses so much on education as well and the character of students at the university because it is found on library desks and reading tables where students read from 8.00am-10.00pm daily.

The graffiti is heavily dependent on the University of Nairobi context to the extent that interpretation of meanings of some phrases, words, clauses and macro-linguistic units is not possible when seen from outside the University of Nairobi environment and perhaps the East African context. We have in mind words like 'Boxers' Cockroaches', 'Stella's' which are only interpretable in the University of Nairobi context. Quite a section of graffiti language on library desks at the University of Nairobi is implied. The meanings are not straight forward. They have to be interpreted for most texts to make sense.

The graffiti writings at the University of Nairobi often have four languages describing love relationships or sexual encounters. Revealing that people of youthful age are a lot more engaged in love matters and graffiti gives them a chance to openly talk about them. Sometimes the language is just abusive for example;

1. a) Check your words!
- b) Shit!
- c) All campus females are prostitutes
- d) Kwani ni yenu? (Is it yours?)
- e) My pussy is always wet, advice

Perhaps, when the language is this foul it brings out real human emotions and even generate intense debate or perhaps this is what makes graffiti a lot juicy and attractive for people of some dispositions. It is important to note that the level of foul language was reflected in both science and arts based on campuses equally. For example, when contributor (c) above says 'all campus females are prostitutes' another contributor (d) asks 'Kwani ni yenu?' (Referring to sexual organs and asking are, 'they yours')

This foul language is the greatest characteristic that cuts across all the graffiti on desks in the campuses we sampled. The language which is in most cases well-formed and grammatical perhaps looks foul as it expresses the underlying emotions of students at the University of Nairobi.

The graffiti is organized in some form of dialogues. The dialogues have an initiation, a reply and occasional feedbacks (Obuchi 2008; Coulthard 1977). Different contributors fill the slots depending on the initiating statements which most times beg for a dialogue of some kind. It seems when someone has an issue he or she initiates dialogue which then has to go on by a number of people contributing to it. It was difficult however to know whether the dialogue is sustained by a small

group of contributors or a large group. Either way, the dialogue is extensive and it discusses across-section of issues that affect students at the University of Nairobi ranging from love issues to educational matters.

Code-mixing and code switching seem prevalent in the data with English language being most prevalent. Whereas English is the dominant language, Sheng's use seems higher compared to Kiswahili use. Other languages native to Kenya like Gikuyu, Kalenjin, Kamba are also used in the data but to a small extent. This shows that desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi is not limited to a small section of ethnic communities. English is not just Kenya's official language but it has over the years has been associated with education and elitism in Kenya. This is unlike Kiswahili which is official language and the data exhibits short sentences as compared to what would be long sentences in legal discourse (see Crystal and Davy 1969). Some sentences have a subject-predicate structure, for example. However, there are also sentences that are elliptical and therefore pointing to elliptical cohesion—nominal, clausal and verbal ellipsis at the same time. The elliptical sentences are mostly found in the reply and feedback slots of the dialogue structure. The contributors seem to be in a hurry as they contribute to this growing graffiti literature at the University of Nairobi because of some of the short forms they use. Perhaps they favor elliptical replies which seem to make communication more economical with less time of writing. Subsequently, contributors do not have much time to read long sentences before they can make their replies. Remember a contributor could read a contribution and decide to start the readership on a completely different engagement. It is interesting to note that punctuation is given high prominence in the desk graffiti. Some words like 'BOXERS' are written in bold perhaps to show emphasis or prominence and to make thematic emphasis clear and pronounced. The desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi has an interesting feature regarding the use of articles. The use of articles is rare and restricted most use being concentrated on content words. Use of prepositions is rare and even conjunctions and embedders. The style of information delivery seems to rely on simpler structures that can be quickly read and understood by the next contributor. The rare use of embedders is attributed to the rare use of complex structures as we have indicated above. Adjectival use also seems rare. In the 100 chunks we examined one could only spot a few prompting the question why? Perhaps because little time is devoted to modification in this graffiti. You will notice that even the adjectives which are used they are so used when then nouns to be modified are deleted and are used also as complements in which case they have a mandatory grammatical function.

### **1.1 METHODOLOGY**

The University of Nairobi has almost over ten libraries. We purposively collected data from Jomo Kenyatta Library, Chiromo library and Kikuyu campus library for three months from January 2012 to March, 2012. Whereas Jomo Kenyatta is a fairly general library, Chiromo is a science based library and on the other hand Kikuyu is an arts based library. This research focused only on desks therefore; we only used data available on desks. Desks in hidden corners seemed to have more data. We gave a keen eye to those desks. Sometimes we took photographs of the graffiti other times we recorded the texts that were organized into chunks. A total of 100 chunks were recorded and we proceeded to analyze a few of them for cohesion patterns using the Halliday and Hasan cohesion model. We based our choice of the few chunks on their salient features of lexical cohesion that we are discussing.

## 1.2 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This paper uses the classical cohesion approach as espoused by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Halliday and Hasan have recognized five types of ties that are possible in any text: Reference cohesion, Substitution, and Ellipsis, all of which are grammatical. On the other hand Conjunction is on the borderline between grammatical and lexical expression. They further observe that Lexical cohesion is largely expressed by vocabulary choice rather than grammar. The above scholars are quick to observe that even then cohesion is a semantic feature. Cohesion occurs only and only if there is a tie. A tie is a relationship between the presupposing element and the presupposed one. In this relationship there are cases of co-referentiality and non-co-referentiality. Halliday and Hasan recognize two types of referencing processes. These are exophoric and endophoric references. The former point to an external text and the latter to the text itself. They refer to the former as exophoric reference and the latter as endophoric reference. It is the endophoric reference that establishes cohesive relationships in a text. On the other hand the exophoric referencing does not have cohesion implications. This is because it links two or more co-referencing elements of a text. It is important to observe that cohesion only occurs when a tie can be traced in a text which may be written or spoken. Halliday and Hasan argue that cohesion is a central characteristic in determining the textuality of text. Although de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) argue for other standards e.g., intentionality, acceptability, coherence, intersexuality, informativity and situationality besides cohesion. Halliday and Hasan maintain that cohesion alone indeed can signal textuality and significant linking and consequently meaning expression.

### 1.3.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF LEXICAL COHESION

In the following section we shall look at two main types of lexical cohesion namely; collocation and reiteration. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that lexical cohesion is lexical-grammatical. This type of cohesion establishes a relationship in the text because of the presence of some lexical items that point toward one another either by referring to the same item or having some semantic associations which facilitate understanding. In the following section we shall first wish to consider repetition since it looks more pronounced.

#### 1.3.1 REITERATION

In this type of cohesion we shall discuss the following sub-types: repetition, synonymy and hyponymy. They are generally treated by Halliday and Hasan as repeated forms. All the three types are subsumed by reiteration. Repetition technically refers to recurrence of linguistic items in a text. This can be done either partially or completely. Of all the lexical types, repetition is the easily noticeable. Writers of desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi use this cohesion technique to achieve unity of the text they are writing and also to facilitate cross-referencing of meaning across texts. Repetition also is certainly easy to notice and perhaps effectively used. There is a sense in which repetition in desk graffiti easily points towards the topic and theme of the text. Repetition also helps to build a world of meanings that facilitates interpretation more especially in graffiti at the University of Nairobi graffiti where one has to deal with multiple writers. There is sense in which repetition tends to be clearer as compared to other types of cohesion like reference cohesion, ellipsis and substitution which demand a rigorous process of interpretation and which may not be favorable to multiple writers like the ones we are dealing with now. Let us look at the following example:-

- 2 a) Some ROACHERS here put faith in Boxers. Take care the BOXERS Have numerous guys both inside and outside the campus. At the end you will collect zero.

- b) SO WHAT? BOXERS ARE SEXY
- c) ARE BOXERS SEXY?
- d) BOXERS ARE KBS. Roachers are passengers
- e) BOXERS don't discriminate, they charge sh. 50 or if you are lucky sh. 2.0.

In this example (2) above one notices the repetition of the lexical item boxers almost 5 times. Further, most of the words that are repeated are written in capital letters as an attempt to make them more pronounced and foregrounded. The lexical item 'Roachers' is repeated twice and 'sexy' is repeated twice also. Notice the discussion is about the University of Nairobi love exploits where female students are referred to as 'Boxers' by their male counterparts who are in turn referred to as 'Cockroaches' or simply 'Roaches'.

The cohesion type in the above text is lexical one where one lexical item is interpreted in reference to another repetition type. It is possible to interpret the text as having fragments that belong together. This is the case because the word 'Boxers' that is used after the first one refers back to the earlier one for interpretation. The chunk has almost 5 different contributors. They are all guided by the same topic of sex, love and boxers within the University of Nairobi campuses and lexical cohesion helps them sustain this topic by guiding the other contributors which way the discussion should go and to show where the focus is from the repeated words. Whether partially repeated or not, the contributors and readers can follow the meaning, the punch of the text which direction they should take in making their contribution. Their contribution to lexical cohesion in this excerpt tends to be nominal as you may notice that in every utterance the word boxer is repeated by every contributor. We agree here that it would be difficult to tell the central issues of the graffiti discussion in desk graffiti at the university of Nairobi if lexical cohesion was not properly coordinated and manifested. Notice the graffiti text tends to be tricky because most texts are normally written by one person. However graffiti has multiple writers. For this reason it requires great care to maintain communication among the writers. The repetition also helps in building scenery and setting of the University of Nairobi context that forms a backdrop for interpretation of meaning. It can be argued that repetition builds the environment image in which now relevant topics can be discussed. Repetition also improves clarity and it perpetuates general standpoints and conceptualization of meaning (see Matei 2005: 147)

Let us look at yet another example that points to the presence of lexical repetition in the University of Nairobi Graffiti. Here we look at an example that reveals lexical repetition.

- 3. a) Sex all night and day long call Wanjiku 0722144661 .100 bob per shot flat rate
- b) Sex any time around and within campus call Shiro 0722134625 .Charges comrades 100 per shot. Others 200 per shot.

This example (3) which seems to have been written by two contributors has elements of lexical cohesion and therefore textuality because of the dominant use of the repetition style. It is noticeable in this data that the word 'sex' is repeated twice. Further, you notice that the lexical item 'sex' comes at the beginning of the sentence. These repetitions and other types in cohesion help to make the textual elements belong together so that they are interpreted as one text. It is important to note that an introduction of another element could change the topic of the contributors. The contributors have to make the word 'sex' stick out to indicate they are still handling that same topic see

Indangasi (1988:151). Notice that now that it is clear it is elliptically referred to in the second sentence of 3b and also elliptically expressed in the last sentence of 3b above in example (3).

The other example below equally reveals the repetition strategy, although this is a case of partial repetition.

4. a) Kikuyu ladies are beautiful
- b.) Kwani Lucy ni M-kale? (Is Lucy a Kalenjin?)
- c.) Sure beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder
- d). Tabia mbaya! (Bad manners)

You will notice the case of partial repetition when the adjective beautiful in the preceding text is partially repeated as a noun, beauty. Again like in the earlier cases of repetition this case has the latter use referring to the earlier text for interpretation. Further, it perpetuates meaning and reinforces the subject matter of discussion which is beauty.

The two lexical items refer to each other. They facilitate cohesion, hanging together of this text written by multiple writer. You will notice that beautiful and beauty does not have the same reference but they are instrumental in the bonding that occurs in these texts. They make strand a, b, c and d belong together as a text.

### 1.3.2 SYNONYMY

Synonymy is yet another cohesive relationship besides repetition found in library graffiti at the University of Nairobi. According to Matthews (1997:367) the relationship of synonymy is one where there is a relationship between two lexical forms with a shared meaning. In cohesion terms, a relation of synonymy is one which has semantic sameness. The two synonymous elements of a language could co-refer to something thus making this type of cohesion partly referential. In this case it could be cataphoric or even anaphoric.

In some other cases the synonymy could be borne out of a purely lexical relationship where the synonymous elements or units may not be referring to the same referent. These two elements may build a relationship of a lexical kind but which is non-referential.

See part of example (2) which we have referred to already.

...Some Roaches love to put faith in BOXERS Take care the BOXERS have numerous guys both inside and outside campus.

In this text, we have already indicated that lexical repetition of the word Boxers causes cohesion. It is also important to note that the relationship of synonymy between 'roaches'(male students), 'guys' or 'roachers' causes meaning relatedness and therefore cohesion as well. In this text, the word 'guy' is interpreted in relation to 'roaches' because they are partial synonyms. This repetition facilitates the understanding of this text so that various parts of it can be interpreted as one whole chunk. As a matter of fact, the repeated aspects look backwards to the earlier text for interpretation and continuity of meaning. This is type of synonymy is not referential in character i.e. in this text roaches and guys do not refer to the same referent.

Let us refer to another example from the University of Nairobi library graffiti data.

7. a) All campus females are prostitutes
- b) Whores /sluts /Malaya wa K- street

In this example (7) the word prostitutes is a synonym of whore, slut, malaya (Swahili word for prostitute) and K-street refers to twilight girls who parade themselves half naked on Koinange street next to the University of Nairobi's main campus in Nairobi Kenya's capital city. The presence of these synonymous relationships helps to reinforce the meaning of what the text refers to. In this case the male students could be using the synonyms to reinforce meaning and to point to hate and therefore a meaning block where this text is interpreted as one whole. Notice that in this text the Kiswahili word 'Malaya' and sluts are presupposed reference to whores and of course the more general noun of campus females. It can be argued that these synonyms are used to reinforce meaning of what is being said by the writers. The synonymy is also used to reinforce cross-interpretation of the text.

Let us look at the following examples of synonymy from the desk graffiti:

8. a) I love a gal and if u love me pliz call 0727158257. By the way I am so  
Lonely such that I need a beautiful chick lik u
- b) Wacha ujinga (stop being stupid)
- c) Sir u serious u want it
- d) 4 real uko sure hauna shonde Kwa brain? (Are you sure your brain does  
not have faeces)
- e) Lao to hell!!! (It is theirs to hell!!!)
- f) Endelea kuwa lonely (Go on being lonely)

In this example (8) which is written using sometimes short and informal forms reveals the synonymy strategy in the desk graffiti. To interpret 'beautiful; chik' one refers to a 'gal' the informal form of girl. The two nouns 'gal' and 'chik' are synonyms. The two items are not necessarily co-referential but because of lexical synonymy, they facilitate textual interpretation because of their sense relationship in the discourse. You will notice the centrality of the two synonyms in the text because the chunk is based on the discussion of one of the writers looking for a girlfriend and hence eliciting a response from the rest of the contributors. Their clear interpretation is largely based on their use of synonyms that facilitate reference and which create a world view of the issues being discussed.

### 1.3.3 HYPONYMY

Yule (1985:95 explains a hyponymy as the meaning of a form subsumed in that of another form. This is a relationship where there is a meaning of general word relating to the meaning of a particular or specific word; hyponym. In this relationship the super ordinate words and their hyponym would reinforce cohesion and hence textuality. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify hyponymy under reiteration. This relationship, though, seems rare in the University of Nairobi library graffiti. Example (9) exemplifies this style of writing desk graffiti in the following way:

9. a) Kamba are very diligent people and also intelligent
- b) Console yourselves
- c) Am a kale and you are an idiot!!!

In this example (9), besides other relationships, there is a relationship between the lexical element Kamba and the lexical element people where Kamba is hyponym and people a super ordinate word, with a general meaning that is more inclusive as compared to Kamba (Kamba here refers to one of

the indigenous tribes of Kenya) that is more exclusive. Similarly Kale (The Sheng form of the Kalenjin people in Kenya) is a hyponym of the lexical item 'people'. There is a sense therefore where a more general word and a word that is particular in meaning refer to one another. For example in this Text, 'Kamba', 'Kale' refers back to the element: people, for interpretation.

In example (5) the relationship between the super ordinate 'CAMPUS FEMALES' and what follows where sluts, Malaya ishyponymic. A campus female is a more general word which relates to more particular words for cohesion purposes. The superordinate and hyponym normally reinforces the meanings of the texts. Unlike repetition and collocation, hyponymy relationship tended to be rare in the University of Nairobi data on library graffiti.

#### 1.4 COLLOCATION

Other than repetition, collocation seems more pronounced in the University of Nairobi desk graffiti. We discuss it in this section. Halliday and Hasan (1976:285) agree with Matthews (1997), when they maintain that collocation refers to lexical items that regularly co-occur. Collocation is therefore used in this paper to refer to words that co-occur in the same domain. These domains are semantically defined. For example a domain can be a food domain like rice and wheat or can be a color domain like white and blue or even a buildings domain like maissonnate and bungalow among others. Relationships that may form lexical collocation could be like the days of the week which usually co-occur. For example, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday may collocate. Reference to one points to the other and when they are used at the same time they have some force which makes them stick together. Further still, the months of the calendar year which usually collocate and could serve as a good example for this relationship. The most important thing is that the lexical items must have associations that make them belong together and establish a cohesive relationship. Note that the lexical items of this kind need not refer to the same item or in other words they need not be co-referential but because of belonging either to a domain of use or a semantic domain they have the potential to form a bond and to create texture. The various excerpts in these data reveal a wide use of this cohesion strategy for building a text. For example, the following example (10) below reveals this style of cohesion:

- 10**
- a) Boxers are chomaring us with VDs
  - b) Cockroaches are the VD carries and transmitters not boxers
  - c) How? Why? Due to Karumaindo Hall 14 effects

In this example (10) students discuss the problem in general terms with the clausal ellipsis that occurs in section c). One can see a heavy sense of collocation as well. Words like 'Boxers', 'Cockroaches', 'Karumaindo', 'chomaring', 'VDs' (the short form of venereal diseases) and 'Hall 14' show collocation. Notice that the collocation of the words is strictly based on their use in the University of Nairobi context where the lexical items co-occur. The text is about love and sexual relationships between male and female students at the University of Nairobi. The interpretation of one is normally made in relationship to the other elements that have a collocative relationship. For example, the interpretation of 'chomaring' the Sheng form of infecting with venereal diseases made in reference to 'Boxers' and even the interpretation of 'cockroaches', and 'VD' is made with a back reference to 'chomaring' and 'Boxers'. This is the case because the words co-occur in their use at the University of Nairobi. The users of this register know this. This way the chunk forms a cohesive unit with a certain meaning reinforced by the occurrence of collocative words. The heavy presence



of lexical elements used help to form a world view of meaning for University of Nairobi students which forms a basis for their interaction and dialogue. Let us refer to the following example (11) as well:

11. a) All Stellas are lovable
- b) Stella yupi?
- c) Which Stella in particular
- d) Boxers in Stella are used
- e) Boxers are Hiv carriers

The words ‘boxers’, ‘Hiv’, ‘Stella’, ‘Lovable’ in this example (11) collocate. They are words drawn from the same love domain of students of the University of Nairobi .Notice the name ‘Stella’ is repeated in every sentence except only one. However the presence of ‘Boxers’ in the last sentence still provides meaning and a strong cohesive force. ‘Stella’ refers to one of the halls of residence where female students live .The lexical items can be interpreted together as linking the fragments together and facilitating meaning because they sustain one another in a cohesive relationship. It is interesting to note that a high presence of collocation at the University of Nairobi desk graffiti is nominal. This is also true of other lexical relationships. This is because nouns and nominal’s are often used in the referring process compared to other word categories.

There is even first illuminating example below

12. a) Exams are there to frustrate students efforts
- b) So what?
- c) Don’t worry u wont fail alone

Whatever else assists in the expression of meaning in this chunk (example 12) like coherence, collocation is one of these factors that help in reinforcing meaning. The words ‘exams’, ‘students’, ‘fail’ are often used collectively. And in this text, interpretation of student and finally fail is made in reference to exams. From their collective use one can quickly make an interpretation that the writers are discussing the challenges of examinations in the university. It is easier to interpret the “exams” being referred to herein the presence of the collective words that follow. Their absence could lead to misinterpretation. Most importantly this chunk can be interpreted as hanging together because of the presence of the collective lexical units that form a world of meaning.

Let us look at yet another case of collocation in the desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi

13. a) Let’s keep the fire burning
- b) Yeah
- c) El-Nino will put it off
- d) Fire brigade will be alerted

In this text there is a collocation relationship between ‘fire, put off, burning and fire-brigade’. The lexical expression facilitating textuality. Besides they facilitate interpretation so that interpretation of one is made in reference to the other. For example

Antonym is treated as an aspect of collocation by Halliday and Hasan though it could stand out as different. Antonymy is another lexical relationship one finds in the University of Nairobi data on library graffiti. Yule (1985:95) gives a basic definition of antonym as two forms with opposite meanings. It is a situation which Lyons (1995:128) refers to as incompatibility. When used together in a text, an antonym normally implies the other and they are suitable in a building a world of meaning. The relationship of meaning opposites like synonymy also helps tie a text together as a fragment and facilitates cross referencing. This is when one thinks of an element is possible and the opposite is implied. The following are examples in the University of Nairobi; library graffiti indicates this usage;

The same relationship of antonymy can be seen in example (2) which we have already referred to earlier (see section 1.3.1). In this excerpt the word 'Boxers' referring to women students is antonymic to cockroaches referring to male students. When the two words are used in the text above help generate implicature because reference to one means not the other and vice versa. Lyons (1995:128) argues for example, one form that is the antonym of the other when used entails the negation of the other. To interpret one, the reader has to make recourse to an earlier one and by their very nature of oppositeness in meaning they help in the interpretation of meaning. It is then possible to interpret a chunk of a text as belonging together. Let us consider the following example of antonymy.

**14. Simo profile**

I hate this lib

I love to graduate

I hate working

I love getting paid

I love women

I hate getting married.

The above example (14) from library data which seems to have been written by one contributor can be said to constitute a text. Other than the uniform syntactic pattern, and parallelism, it also exhibits antonymic cohesion. Words hate and love are used as antonyms in the text. Their use forms a collocation of same kind. It is true that the text also exhibits lexical repetition of love and hate. However, it is also true that the antonymic relationship is present. Unlike in the earlier case of repetition verbs here are central elements in these repetition ties. They are used to show what the writers like and hate at the same time. Although they are opposites, they are used to help the text be strung together. Indeed the meaning of the writers express that of loving one part of something and loving the other part that sound almost poetic is heavily cohesive through the relationship of antonymy.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

This paper has discussed data of library desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi. It focused mainly on lexical cohesion. The paper has demonstrated that although the desk library graffiti at the University of Nairobi is by multiple writers, it is still organized in terms of cohesion that helps to facilitate co-interpretation and understanding of meaning of the desk graffiti texts. Although only one type of cohesion is discussed viz lexical cohesion other types of cohesion are present too. Two types of lexical cohesion have been discussed: reiteration, subsuming, repetition, collocation, hyponymy and synonymy and collocation that subsumes antonymy. It is concluded in this paper that repetition sub type cohesion compared to the rest of sub types of cohesion seems preferred in the writing of desk graffiti at the University of Nairobi. This cohesion strategy seems to make the topics of discussion clearer, prominent and pronounced. Collocation is not as pronounced as repetition with antonymy being fairly rare. The lexical relationships tended to be nominal and rarely verbal demonstrating that the University of Nairobi is a lot more subject and not predicate based. It seeks to make topics mostly referred to by nominals clearer. Similarly, it is demonstrated that we have as much graffiti data on desks across the University of Nairobi campuses that were studied as we have in toilets that have been studied earlier.

In a general sense, graffiti writing as a style seemed to point more to male contribution of the data as compared to female contribution because of the manner in which it had serious biases against women and female students. Graffiti tended to cut across science based and arts based campuses of the University of Nairobi with most interaction seeming to be among undergraduate students. This position is albeit tentative and needs more research to establish these trends completely.

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