

Semiotic Modes as Health Communication Tools in Herbal Drinks' Labels in Nigeria

Olamide Ijadimine¹, Olusanya R. Bolarinwa^{2*} and Susan O. Akinkurolere³

^{1,2}*Department of Languages, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, Nigeria*

³*Department of Academic Language and Literacy Skills, University of Botswana, Botswana*

¹*ijadimine@gmail.com, ²styfanoray@gmail.com and ³akinkuroleresusan@gmail.com*

¹*https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7838-1063; ²https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7523-5705 and ³https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3058-8576*

**Correspondence Author: styfanoray@gmail.com*

Received: 16th Dec, 2025; Revised: 8th Feb 2026; Accepted: 12th Feb, 2026; Available Online: 28th Feb, 2026

ABSTRACT

Herbal medicines are generally advertised in different ways to communicate, and influence consumer perceptions of potential benefits. This paper focuses on the images of non-alcoholic herbal drinks' labels in Ondo State, Nigeria, to identify social-semiotic features of herbal drinks' labels, relate the analysed features to the theme of medicine; and describe the contributions of semiotic modes toward meaning making in the labels. Since the use of herbal products as a remedy for self-administered health care continues to increase, it is necessary to understand how producers present health claims to convince the consumers. The paper relies on a qualitative approach in analysing the images through Kress' and Van Leeuwen's, and Halliday's Social Semiotic theory. The analysis of the semiotic resources of five herbal drinks does not only imply they are tools of generating medicine-related meanings, but they are rich in inherent meanings for positive life outcomes. The study showed that labels on herbal beverages often use semiotic resources such as colour, graphology, shade, distance among others to portray the drinks as medically beneficial, and to position the products as a necessity of life. For academics, new doors of research are opened in the areas of advertising discourse, health communication, and the marketing of herbal medicine.

Keywords: advertisements, communication, health, herbs, images, multimode

How to cite this article: Ijadimine O, Bolarinwa OR, Akinkurolere SO, Semiotic Modes as Health Communication Tools in Herbal Drinks' Labels in Nigeria. *Int J Drug Deliv Technol.* 2026;16(17s): 136-145. DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16.17s.17

Source of support: Nil.

Conflict of interest: None

I. INTRODUCTION

Several herbal beverages comprise medicinal benefits due to their antioxidant properties¹. Also, new herbal drinks are increasingly produced by different manufacturers. These herbal drinks are produced as natural medicine or drugs. Indeed, traditional, or herbal medicine, have been used for many centuries for health care by people in countries of the South-East Asia Region as well as in other parts of the world². The importance of traditional medicine is premised on its continuous source of remedies for health challenges of millions of people across the globe. It is imperative that manufacturers design their products' labels to attract customers or consumers. This is one of the means through which products are advertised.

Television, radio, print media such as magazines, leaflets, flyers, handbills, and periodic reports are common ways through which drugs are advertised³. Herbal drinks' companies depend so much on products' labels to promote sales. The essence of the labels is to communicate a message to potential consumers. Essentially, herbal alcoholic drinks' labels are considered an effective means

of advertising products. The use of labels on products is not only for branding but advertisement. Consequently, labels on products are multi-functional and most manufacturers explore this means optimally to promote their goods. No doubt, herbal beverages are a welcome development in orthodox medicine and agencies that regulate drugs and food in Nigeria such as National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC). This agency registers various companies producing herbal beverages and it assigns registration numbers to their products. These brands include but not limited to Alomo, Bitters, Confam, Sexy Megato, Kakaraka bitters, Orijin bitters, "Gbe Body E". Therefore, this paper is essentially concerned about the images in the labels of non-alcoholic herbal drinks because it is generally acceptable to a larger category of people because some people detest alcohol⁴.

II. THEORETICAL APPROACH: SEMIOTICS

Semiotics focusses on signs and symbols as elements of language and other communication systems⁵. Examples are traffic signs, emojis and emotions used in electronic

**Author for Correspondence: styfanoray@gmail.com*

communication, logos and brands used by international corporations to sell things. To Ferdinand de Saussure, a father of semiotics who lived from 1857 to 1913, a sign, any motion, gesture, image pattern or event that conveys meaning is within the ambit of semiotics.

Social semiotics is a social approach to semiotic resource of language about meaning and its making through different modes. Indeed, meaning becomes evident through such modes in their respective contexts. The connective ties among different modes establish a meaningful relationship as a form of discourse, that is, language in use. Language is a system of signs within a social-cultural context⁶. The signs are not only language alone but other semiotic resources that include visual, graphical, gestural, and musical resources. No wonder, it was argued that social semiotics is premised on the belief that signs and messages are contextualised in social relations and processes, because they generate different meanings for different readers⁷.

Images are products of real social institutions⁸. The images play real roles in social life in communicating with readers, and at the same time, shaping attitudes of participators, whether as authors or readers. It is therefore perceived that the study of non-alcoholic herbal drinks' labels, which are rich in semiotic modes, especially images, deserves linguistic attention since it tends to establish a connection between verbal and non-verbal texts.

Various scholars have worked on semiotics and multimodality of images^{7,9,10,11,3,12}. A semiotic analysis of Indian television advertisement and its impacts of Indian television advertisement on consumers was conducted to show the differential impacts semiotics have on consumers and how it can be made more effective by understanding the language and impacts of semiotics on consumers in India¹⁰. Advertisements have through their themes and colours made more specific impact that semiotics on consumers. Thereby, demonstrating how it can be made more effective.

The trend towards a multimodal appreciation of meaning making was supported with the argument that all modes are critical in the semiotic systems and deserved a detailed analysis¹³. Social semiotic description of visual communication explores what can be said and done with images, and they are interpreted¹⁴. The demonstration of how and why semiotics serves as a critical theoretical framework in the process of excavating meanings in visual messages¹⁵ and it has been applied to diverse studies by analysing multimodal features of posters, stickers, and literature³. These studies have paid little attention to visual images deployed in traditional medicine despite the heavy consumption of herbal drinks.

The key features of semiotics are colour, images, and graphology. Colour is significant in semiotics. A set of rules can be applied to colour as a crucial mode of colour is a distinct mode that is rich in meaning. What a red colour represents is different from yellow colour's

interpretation. Just as they imply different concepts, they also possess the capability to create different effects on the viewer(s). Notably, colour serves as a semiotic device that provides cohesion⁸. In advertisements, colours are used as signifiers. Hence, colour interpretation is also influenced by the socio-cultural context. A summary of features associated with colour are colour saturation, colour differentiation, colour modulation, contextualization, representation, and illumination¹⁶.

Graphology is a linguistic level of analysis that comprises the study of graphic aspects of language¹⁷. As such, graphology provides ample opportunity for linguists interested in semiotics to explore graphic resources in language which include font, point, punctuation, spelling, bolding, case, italics, and any other aspect. While the various graphological features are mainly graphemes; hence, making graphology to be regarded as the study of graphemes¹⁸. Of a truth, images do exhibit meaning potentials which usually create their own symbolic power¹². Images are employed as sets of visual mode to create representational, interactive, and compositional meanings which are semiotically significant. On appropriate description of an image, the hierarchy of an image consists of three levels that build on each other, which are pre-iconography, iconography, and post-iconology: interpreting the image, establishing its contextual and intellectual significance¹⁹.

Despite the various ways herbal medicine producers rely on semiotic resource for marking their drinks, it seems that much attention has not been given to their semiotic features. Hence, considering the increasing types of herbal drinks, and the appropriateness of semiotic analysis by leveraging on semiotic framework, this study intends to fill a gap by making a further development in the social semiotic theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen based on Halliday^{6,8}.

III.METHODS

It is noted that common herbal drinks contain alcohol with varying sentiments due to cultural and religious beliefs. Therefore, this paper focused on 5 non-alcoholic herbal drinks produced by Nigerian companies registered with National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control as data for our research. By relying on a semiotic theoretical framework, which observes various semiotic resources on labels as choices made by manufacturers to promote sales or encourage patronage, Kress', and Van Leeuwen's model and Halliday's theory of social semiotics serve as theories guiding the study^{6,8}. The 5 non-alcoholic herbal drinks were selected through a random sampling technique. The texts extracted were captioned as Texts A1-A5. The random sampling technique is based on the prominence among retailers of herbal-alcoholic drinks' labels. To collect the data, the primary data were the labels of herbal drinks, which were snapped. After which, they were studied and analysed in line with the research objectives.

The research is qualitative in approach. Hence, observation was applied based on pre-designed checklist based on a list of semiotic modes. To arrive at reasonable reliability and validity of the research instrument, the individual researcher observed at different times and

compared notes and conducted a pilot study for the purposes of validity and reliability.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The below images are the five data selected for this study.



Figure 1: Data 1



Figure 2: Data 2



Figure 3: Data 3



Figure 4: Data 4



Figure 5: Data 5

RQ 1. What are the Socio-Semiotic Features of Herbal Drinks' Labels?

The social-semiotic resources deployed in the visual component of the data from this study are colours which are used as meaning signifiers and pictures used as features of semiotic resources. To this end, the white, black, red, yellow, blue, green, orange and purple colours used in varied degrees in the pictures are features of semiotic resources employed as meaning signifiers.

Some other semiotic resources employed in the data are pictures of man and woman as well as that of lions. Yet, other semiotic resources noted in the data are pictures of

various plants and leaves which indicate the components of the content of the drinks.

RQ 2. How do the analysed features relate to the theme of medicine?

In a bid to unravel how the analysed social-semiotic features relate to the theme of medicine in the labels, there is need to know if the verbal anchorage of the pictures totally agrees with the visual components as demonstrated in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: The Relationship between the analysed features and the theme of medicine

S/N	Theme	Visual Component (VC) Text	Verbal Anchorage (VA)	Relationship		
				VC	VA	Agree
		Text A2	“Energy Booster”	+	+	Yes
		Text A5	“Power to do more”	+	+	Yes
			“Pile and waist pain”	+	+	Yes
		Text A2	“Pile and waist pain”	+	+	Yes

		“Energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“Atura Bomber to Bomber”	-	+	Yes
		“For pile and waist Pain”	+	+	Yes
		“Energy booster”	+	+	Yes
	Text A1	(lion’s whip) ‘Jedi oloyin’ (Pile remedy made with honey)	-	+	Yes
		“Senuebo” (Hope you can keep secret)	+	+	Yes
	Text A2	“Energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“Extra power to do more”	+	+	Yes
		“Premature ejaculation”	+	+	Yes
		“any sexual imbalance”	+	+	Yes
	Text A3	“Kick and fire”	+	+	Yes
	Text A5	“pile and waist pain”	+	+	Yes
		“extra power to do more”	+	+	Yes
	Text A2	“energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“pile and waist pain”	+	+	Yes
		“Premature ejaculation”	+	+	Yes
		“any other sexual related imbalance”	+	+	Yes
	Text A3	“Kick and fire”	+	+	Yes
	Text A5	“For pile and waist Pain”	+	+	Yes
		Energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“power to do more”	+	+	Yes
	Text A2	“energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“pile and waist pain”	+	+	Yes
		“Premature ejaculation”	+	+	Yes
		“any other sexual related imbalance”	+	+	Yes
	Text A3	“Kick and fire”	+	+	Yes
	Text A5	“For pile and waist Pain”	+	+	Yes
		Energy booster”	+	+	Yes
		“power to do more”	+	+	Yes
	Text A1	“Honey based syrup”	+	+	Yes
	Text A3	“Kick and fire”	+	+	Yes

RQ 3. How do Semiotic modes contribute to meaning making in the Labels?

Since modes refer to a socially organised set of semiotic resources for meaning, the semiotic modes identified in the data contribute to the meaning-making in the labels in different ways.

Text A1

In text A1, the semiotic modes observed on the label are red colour, green colour, black colour, a picture of a woman, as well as the text of the name of the drink, ‘Jedi Oloyin’ – ‘Honey-based syrup’, Non-Alcoholic’,

'Semiotic Herbal mixture' and the instruction is 'Not for pregnant women'.

The red colour signifies the fineness and good quality of the drink. The green colour represents fertility, productivity of the drink, while the black colour means the strength, energy, and fertile qualities of the product. The picture of a young woman is to reinforce the instruction, not for pregnant women as well as showing the recommended category of consumers. It implies that the drink is for young couples who are expectant.

The text 'Jedi Oloyin' meaning 'Honey-based syrup' is a semiotic mode which means that the product is mainly produced to combat pile related ailments. The word 'senuebo' in Senuebo Herbal Mixture means 'can you keep a secret? This question is posed to any intending consumer of the product to the effect that the drink has certain secrets that can only be exposed to its consumers. This secret may not be unconnected with the type of sexual vigour that would follow the use of the drink. Also, the inclusion of 'non-alcoholic' in the text is also a semiotic mode which means that the product can be taken by everyone except a pregnant woman as instructed because it is not against any religious rule as a non-alcoholic drink.

Text A2

This data contains some semiotic modes which contribute to the meaning of the label. The modes include the picture of a lion, black colour, orange, red, blue colour, green colour, and the text of the label. The picture of a lion with an opened mouth is a mode that signifies the strength of the herbal drink. This implies that there is no sexual-related ailment that the herbal drink cannot combat. The idea is to present the herbal drink in the light of a lion, the king of the jungle. Also, the colours are also semiotic modes which are used to communicate the power, strength, energy, vigour, fertility, fineness, quality nature of the non-alcoholic herbal drink.

On the other hand, the text of the label like "sexy megato", "Sexual Elixir", 'Energy Booster', 'Extra power to do more' 'penis enlargement', 'pile and waist pain', 'premature Ejaculation', or 'any other related sexual imbalance' are modes which mean that the herbal drink is a remedy for the enumerated problems. This is against the background of the fact that, in recent times, men talk about their sexual prowess while many homes are broken on the account of the inability of either of the couple to meet his or her partner's expectation when it comes to sex or childbearing. The products are, therefore, produced with the sole objective of serving as a remedy to the identified problems. It is also on this note that the phrase, 'men and women' is added on the label since the problem is not peculiar to either of the sex.

The choice of 'sexual megato' and 'sexual Elixir' are significant as it can be interpreted to mean sexual strength and life cure for any form of sexual problem, be it weak erection, small organ, low sperm count, irregular menstrual period, or menstrual pain.

Text A3

The semiotic modes observed in this data are a picture of a man and woman, plants, black and green colours as well as the text of the label. All these modes contribute to the meaning in the label. The picture of a man and woman in romantic posture points to the fact that the intake of the non-alcoholic herbal drink increases libido in both genders. Thus, it can be tagged 'manpower' herbal drink. The use of black and green colours, as semiotic modes in the label, is to reinforce the theme of the label, which is libido booster, energy booster or sexual enhancer, as well as fertility potentials of the herbal drink. The plants are modes which reveal the source and components of the product. It reinforces the fact that the drink is a locally made one.

On the other hand, the text of the label, 'kick and fire' is crafted to reinforce the idea that the drink boosts libido and increases manpower when it comes to sexual intercourse. The expression, 'kick and fire' creates the image of an engine that starts working immediately it is kicked. This implies that, as soon as one takes the drink, one begins to function as desired.

Text A4

In Data A4, the semiotic modes noted include a picture of a woman, brown and black colours, as well as the texts of the label. These modes contribute to the meaning of the label. The picture is a semiotic mode which explains the use of the herbal drink since it is meant for men and women, the use of the picture is an attempt to say that the drink is beneficial to both sexes, especially in reproductive health.

Also, the black and brown colours are modes that signify strength, vigour, energy, fertility etc., in the label, while the white colour is used to signify the purity and fineness of the herbal drink as an herbal product which does not have any negative side effect when consumed. The text of the label, beginning from the name, 'Gbe body e', which could be interpreted in English as "Move yourself" signifies that, with this drink, there is no dull moment. The herbal drink enhances sexual activeness. Other expressions such as "energy booster", "extra power to do more", 'penile enlargement' 'pile and waist pain', 'premature ejaculation' or 'any other related sexual imbalance' are all semiotic modes which mean that the herbal drink is a sexual enhancement and therapy for all forms of sexual or reproductive disorder.

The inclusion of the expressions 'chocolate flavour' and 'for men and women' are also semiotic modes. The phrase 'chocolate flavour' shows that the female gender loves anything chocolate and to make them interested in the drink, chocolate flavour is added as an attraction. On the other hand, the expression 'for men and women' in the label is to reinforce the non-alcoholic nature of the herbal drink since it is assumed that majority of women do not desire alcohol.

Text A5

This data contains some semiotic modes, including a picture of a man and woman smiling in romantic posture, a picture of a horse in moving posture, white, red, and green colours, and the text of the label. Also, the picture of a man and woman in romantic posture represented the desired pleasure from the intake of the herbal drink. It further revealed that the couple do not have any problem, having taken the herbal drink. It also revealed that the drink is beneficial to both female and male gender.

The use of the picture of a horse in motion is a semiotic mode that signifies that strength, vigour, energy, and power that are derived from the consumption of the herbal drink. It reinforces durability and vitality potential of the drink despite being a non-alcoholic one. The colours also reinforce the idea of fineness, quality, fertility, and productivity potentials of the herbal drink. This implies that the herbal drink boosts libido in both sexes.

The text of the label, beginning from the name "Atura" could be interpreted as what can calm a person, and it points to the idea that herbal drink can calm couples' nerves. The phrase 'Bomber to Bomber' also means that after taken the drink, the couple would not want to leave each other again, it brings about bond and love that unites a man and woman. From all the semiotic modes discussed, it is evident that the modes contribute to the meaning of the label in different ways.

V. DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows how the analysed features relate to the theme of medicine in the selected herbal drinks' labels. One of the integral parts of this research is to describe how the semiotic features identified in the data relate to the theme of medicine. The verbal and non-verbal components of the semiotic features observed in the herbal drinks' labels relate to the theme of medicine. This is in concomitance with the view that 'the juxtaposition of picture and word usually results in a new holistic interpretation of the scripto-pictorial or audio-visual message'²⁰. It is not just a text-image relation but essentially the ways that both modes work together to produce a coherent, unified, multimodal text'. The study in focus this view in the way and manner the semiotic features all work together to project the theme of medicine.

In a related manner, there is a strong relationship between visual and visible language and the physical contexts in which it operates²¹. In like manner, this study stresses a tight relationship between the verbal and non-verbal components of all the semiotic features and medicine since they are produced in the contexts of medicine. Thus, such verbal anchorage as waist and back pain, sexual imbalance, immune system, boost vitality, two spoonsful twice daily, etc., are all suggestive of the facts that the drinks features are produced in the context of medicine and thus related. It was also averred that an anchorage accounts for visual-verb dependency and selects for the reader/viewer one of the many possible interpretations²².

It should be noted that the use of expressions like good appetizer, genuine vitality, actual medicinal plants, bitters, pure herbal extracts, energy drink, honey-based syrup, NAFDAC No., and non- alcohol are used as symbols of medicine which assist the producers to show how the visual component and verbal anchorage of the semiotic features relate the theme of medicine. This supports the view that 'the multimodal features demonstrate evidence of various semiotic resources to achieve connotative meaning and obtain the best advertising effect'²³. Thus, the study in focus emphasises that since the labels are modes of advertisement, the semiotic resources identified are to convey the theme of medicine because the drinks possess healing nature.

They present the drink as an herbal medicine produced with local herbs in Nigeria to attract the attention of the people of Ondo State to their product. This is due to the popular belief of majority of the people in the efficacy of any medicine that is herbal in nature as it is constantly evolving in present day Nigeria with its contribution²⁴. In virtually all the labels, there are verbal anchorages that point to medicine which show that the semiotic features relate to the theme of medicine. The discussion is further based on the identified themes while analysing the data.

1. Strength and Energy

Strength and energy are generally assumed to be vital in any individual's sex desire in modern day society, in general. Complaints arising from some men and women about issues that border on childlessness, lack of interest in sexual activities, impotency, low sperm count, weak erection and sexual dissatisfaction appear to be common in the typical African society. The quest for solutions to these problems has, perhaps necessitated the brewing of different herbal bitter drinks, which are believed to be capable of resolving the problems that are mentioned. It can be deduced that certain customs and traditions of the people of the South-Western Nigeria which see sex as a key to keeping marital relationship as well as procreation may also contribute to the important place of strength and energy as observed in the data.

2. Good Health

The place of good health in human life and socio-economic aspects of every society cannot be overemphasized. Also, good health is very crucial in sexuality. This is due to the fact it is only a healthy person that can desire sex. Therefore, in every marriage or marital relationship, good health enhances the couples sex life and so, the herbal drinks are produced as antidotes to any form of sickness or ailment that can affect the health of the people. The labels are, therefore, crafted in such a way that the potency of these drinks in curing or alleviating all forms of ailment is projected. This is done to attract everyone to the herbal drinks since good health is the desire of every human being.

3. Sexual strength or Weakness

Sexual strength or weakness in society is due to a few factors. For instance, sexual strength can be attributed to

the absence of STD, infections, and probably back pain while sexual weakness is believed to emanate from any of the ailments and the excess consumption of sweetened food. There are thousands of men who are sexually strong to the extent that they are prides of many, especially women. Conversely, certain men and women are sexually weak that they are ridiculed in the society. It is against these backgrounds that these herbal bitters are produced with the belief that their consumption will increase the strengths of the weak ones; boost their libido and consolidate the strengths of the strong ones.

4. Reproductive Health

In our social cultural milieu, so much importance is attached to ability to procreate. Thus, the expectation of an average person is that children are expected from every relationship and, when this is not so, family members and friends begin to offer various suggestions. Hence, the theme of reproductive health involves different ways of addressing problems, which are associated with reproductive health. It is worthy of note that vast majority of these herbal drinks are produced against the background of being capable of improving reproductive health of the people.

5. Sexuality and Sex Potency

The theme of sexuality or sex potency is projected throughout the entire texts of the data. Perhaps, people are more interested in sex activities in recent times. Such awareness informed the production of these herbal drinks with vigorous advertisement. It is worthy of note that the ways and manner the herbal drinks' labels are crafted with the various inscriptions as well as pictures are capable of awaken the sexuality of people who are indifferent about sex. The labels also seem to assure the audience of sexual potency.

6. Originality and Quality

It is a known fact that originality and quality are very important in anything, especially consumables like food and drinks. It is against this background that the producers of these herbal drinks emphasize the ideals. For instance, each of the herbal drinks' labels contain NAFDAC registration number which is an indication of government approval as well as originality and good quality. This is also shown in the composition of the drinks as indicated in their labels. Thus, we can see such expressions as 'original herbal bitters' and the likes.

Before now, scholars all over the world have considered visual communication as secondary in interpretation and analysis of human communication. However, it is discovered that semiotic analysis allows us to explore images and texts by critically describing the features of visual images. This points to the fact that images, sometimes, exhibit more meanings than we have in texts. Visual texts have also been found to effectively communicate as verbal or written texts do.

To this end, this study emphasizes the place of visual communication among human beings in various climes,

especially in consumables' labels. This is due to the fact humans live and interact with millions of images in our daily routine. Consciously or unconsciously, we are daily faced with visual information like the food, water, or air. This position is in tandem with the submission that 'Multimodal analysis is, therefore, a methodological tool positioned in between texts (visual images like photography, films, TV shows, advertisements, press, etc. but also design, architecture and art) and their meanings', and the position that 'in the late 20th century's explosion of images and visualizing technologies (digitization, satellite imaging, new forms of medical imagery, virtually reality, etc.) in everyday life has become visual culture'^{25,26}. Corroborating the above, it was further stated that what was essentially a linguistic unit 100 years ago has now become a visual unit'^{25,27,28}.

It is in this connection that herbal drinks' labels as a medium of sharing visual information with the prospective consumers by herbal drinks producers in Ondo State, Nigeria to present very sensitive information to the public. In line with the observation that '...with the advent of aggressive advertisement when production exceeded consumption, manufacturers saw the need to attract more customers to their goods and the competition led to innovations in the world markets as a whole and this affected everything'¹³. In this regard, such herbal drinks' labels heavily depend on modes from available semiotic resources which goes beyond the boundaries of language to include colours, images or pictures, distance, gaze, etc. to construct deep meanings that last long in the minds of the viewers. When such images are accompanied with appealing verbal anchorages, the message sinks deeper and convince anyone.

The herbal drinks' labels parade attractive pictures as well as catchy verbal anchorages. Also, virtually all the pictures look candid or factual as the manufacturers purposefully adopt the pictures communicate the effectiveness of the drinks. The embedded meanings in the verbal anchorages are well captured in the visual images such that the verbal anchorages and the visual components relate to the meaning of the medicine while contributing to the meaning making in the herbal drinks' labels. The study, thus, establishes the possibilities of visual images in herbal drinks' labels to convey meaning beyond the verbal texts.

In line with the submissions of some scholars, herbal drinks seem to greatly influence the course of medicine in Ondo State, Nigeria, as the issues treated in the identified features and many other developments control, to a great extent, the patronage and consumption of the herbal drinks^{3,29}. This clearly reveals that the identified features share a symbiotic relationship with the theme of medicine in the labels. The development of the identified features further revealed that herbal beverages play prominent roles in the health of the people of State. The semiotic features of the herbal drinks' labels therefore impress the efficacy of the herbal drinks in the consciousness of the people.

To this end, the practice of the producers of herbal drinks can be seen as an indication of the future of African traditional medicine is bright in that it will enhance service provision, increase health care coverage, its formal recognition and integration into conventional medicine and health care system is organized into three different levels of specialty: divination, spiritualism, and herbalism³⁰. The producers, thus, explain and guide public opinion on the sensitivity of the issues presented in the visual texts as they were followed with verbal anchorages. The visuals and verbal anchorages, therefore, provide the people a better understanding of the therapeutic benefits of the herbal drinks, especially to men who are always conscious of their sexual prowess and expectant couples.

To this end, this paper agrees with the submission that in multimodality analysis, colour has an important role to highlight and frame specific aspects of the overall message^{31,32,33,34}. This implies that all the semiotic modes work together to contribute to meaning making in the labels. Also, it was stated that '... verbal and non-verbal language cannot be separated. Communication is thus increasingly becoming multimodal across different contexts as text producers draw on a wide range of semiotic resources for the projection of meaning'²⁸. It, therefore, suffices to say that all the visual images and verbal anchorage in the data which form the semiotic modes project the meanings in the herbal labels. In line with above submissions, it is noted that the semiotic modes in the data jointly enhance meaning making in the herbal drinks' labels.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the study in focus and based on the empirical facts from the data of the study, the identified features represent some significant objectives and focus of the producers of herbal drinks consumed in Ondo State, South-Western Nigeria. There are empirical facts from the data of study show that herbal drink labels could be appropriately analysed from the perspective of semiotics.

The identified socio-semiotic features relate to the theme of medicine in the labels because the features projected as well as reinforce the theme of medicine each of the herbal drink labels. Lastly, as evident from the empirical study of the data for the study, indeed, the semiotic modes identified in the herbal labels all contribute to meaning making in the labels. The colour modes, visual modes and verbal anchorages in the labels work together to reinforce meanings in the herbal labels.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed the findings, drawn conclusions and summarized the research work, the following are the recommendations of this study:

i. It was observed that while some of the herbal labels contained just only the colour modes and verbal anchorages, others contained very captivating pictures. The study recommends that producers of herbal drinks should ensure there are adequate relevant visuals and verbal anchorages in the labels.

- ii. Due to the fact some labels contained semiotic features but were presented without detailed write-ups or visual images on them, this could affect the analysis as well as the comprehension of the intended meanings. Hence, this study recommended that more detailed verbal anchorages and corresponding visual images on them should be provided.
- iii. Producers of herbal drinks in Nigeria in general and Ondo state should fully exploit pictorial images as potential tools in their process of herbal advertisement and information dissemination on their products.
- iv. Consumers of herbal drinks should always explore the hidden meanings in the labels of the products.
- v. The study also recommended that future researchers' efforts could be directed at socio-semiotic analysis of herbal drinks' labels of other kinds of drinks in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- [1] E. J. Abuya and S. O. Akinkurolere, "Engaging with old testament stories: A Multimodal social-semiotic approach to children Bible illustrations," *Int. J. Appl. Linguist. English Lit.*, vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 219-225, 2012.
- [2] E. J. Abuya and S. O. Akinkurolere, "Reading meaning through the visuals: Social semiotic approach to TELL magazine in Nigeria," *New Media Mass Commun.*, vol. 17, pp. 65-69, 2013.
- [3] M. Ademilokun and M. Olateju, "A multimodal discourse analysis of some visual images in the political rally discourse of 2011 electioneering campaigns in Southwestern Nigeria," *Int. J. Society, Culture Language*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1-19, 2016.
- [4] D. Adilah and D. A. Kwary, "A multimodality analysis of advertisements indicating customers' age," *Anglicist*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 24-31, 2016.
- [5] S. O. Akinkurolere, V. O. Ayodele, B. B. Kumuyi, L. Shaba, and A. Ajayi, "Redefining the wants of women in an African society: A Multimodal discourse features of selected Christian women mirror magazine," presented at the Women's Research and Documentation Conf. (WORDOC), Inst. African Studies, Univ. Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, Oct. 18–20, 2017.
- [6] M. Alugbin, "Register shift and sexuality: A discourse reading of herbal medicine advertisements," *UNIUYO J. Humanities*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 282-298, 2019.
- [7] A. A. Alexandra and M. Landon-Hays, "A social semiotic analysis of instructional images across academic disciplines," *Visual Commun.*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 3-31, 2016.

- [8] K. S. Ariyo, "Multimodal discourse analysis of panorama pictures in selected editions of TELL news magazine," Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. English Studies, Adekunle Ajasin Univ., Akungba Akoko, 2015.
- [9] J. C. M. Barreira, A. L. Morais, I. C. F. R. Ferreira, and M. B. P. P. Oliveira, "Insights on the formulation of herbal beverages with medicinal claims according with their antioxidant properties," *Molecules*, vol. 18, pp. 2851-2863, 2013.
- [10] R. Barthes, *Image–Music–Text*. London: Fontana Press, 1977.
- [11] P. Donohoe, "Visual literacy and the visual turn," *J. Visual Culture*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 159–180, 2007.
- [12] E. Gómez-Jiménez, "An introduction to graphology: Definition, theoretical background and levels of analysis," *Miscelánea: J. English Amer. Studies*, vol. 51, pp. 71-85, 2015.
- [13] M. A. K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold, 1978.
- [14] O. Ijadimine, "A semiotic analysis of herbal drinks' labels," M.A. thesis, Dept. English, Joseph Ayo Babalola Univ., Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria, 2020.
- [15] C. Jewitt and R. Oyama, "Visual meaning: A social semiotic approach," in *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, T. Van Leeuwen and C. Jewitt, Eds. London: Sage, 2001.
- [16] G. Kress and T. Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London/New York: Routledge, 1996.
- [17] G. Kress and T. Van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communications*. London: Arnold, 2001.
- [18] G. Kress and T. Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd ed. London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
- [19] M. M. Linda, "Multimodal discourse analysis of advertisements of Hongkong charity organisations," M.A. thesis, Univ. Hongkong, 2005.
- [20] S. Liu, "A multimodal Analysis of the interactive meaning in public service advertisement," *J. Advances Linguistics*, vol. 10, pp. 1523-1534, 2019.
- [21] D. Masereka, "A social-semiotic analysis of tattooing among the youth in Kampala, Uganda," M.A. thesis, Kampala Int. Univ., Kampala, Uganda, 2019.
- [22] M. I. Mehawesh, "The socio-semiotic theory of language and translation: An overview," *Int. J. Humanities Social Sci.*, vol. 4, no. 8, pp. 87-96, 2014.
- [23] E. Miltenburg, D. Elliott, and P. Vossen, "Cross-linguistic differences and similarities in image description," in *Proc. 10th Int. Natural Lang. Generation Conf., Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Sep. 2017*, pp. 21–30.
- [24] S. North, "The interdependence of picture and word," *J. Visual Commun.*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 453–469, 1990.
- [25] M. Olateju, O. Oyeboode, and M. Ademilokun, *Doing Multimodal Discourse Analysis*. Ibadan: College Press Publishers, 2014.
- [26] A. Olowu, "A multimodal discourse analysis of Christian women mirror magazine," M.A. thesis, Dept. English, Obafemi Awolowo Univ., Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2012.
- [27] A. Olowu and S. O. Akinkurolere, "A multimodal discourse analysis of selected advertisement of malaria drugs," *English Rev.: J. English Educ.*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 167-174, 2015.
- [28] M. Purmehdi, R. Legoux, F. A. Carrillat, and S. Senecal, "The effectiveness of warning labels for consumers: A meta-analytic investigation into their underlying process and contingencies," *J. Public Policy Marketing*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 1-48, 2016.
- [29] G. Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretations of Visual Materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.
- [30] M. Sandra, "Visual semiotics theory and book of visual communication; Theory, methods, and media," vol. 8, pp. 227–241, 2005.
- [31] P. Shama and P. Gupta, "Semantics analysis of indian television advertisements and its impacts on consumers: An exploratory study," *ECSACHES J. Commun. Studies*, vol. 8, pp. 71–90, 2015.
- [32] A. Vezovnik and T. Kamin, "Constructing class, gender, and nationality in socialism: a multimodal analysis of food advertisements in the Slovenian Magazine Nasa Zena," *Teorija Praksa*, vol. 53, no. 6, pp. 1327-1343, 2016.
- [33] K. Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. London: Longman, 2001.
- [34] World Health Organisation, "Traditional herbal remedies for primary health care". India: Regional Office for South-East Asia, 2010. [Online]. Available: http://apps.searo.who.int/PDS_DOCS/B4572.pdf