

# **Journal of Nigerian Languages and Culture**



**Volume 13, No1 March, 2011  
ISSN 1595-4730**

**Published by  
Association for promoting  
Nigerian Languages and culture**

**tetfund**  
Sponsored

**Journal of Nigerian Languages and Culture  
(JONLAC)**

**ISSN 1595 – 4730**

**Vol. 13 No.1**

**March, 2011**

**Published by  
Association for Promoting Nigerian Languages and  
Culture (APNILAC)**

**All rights reserved**

**Printed in Nigeria by:  
SAN PRESS LTD.**

**182 Agbani Road,  
Enugu, Enugu State**

**08033169079, 08182015290**

**E-mail: [sanpressenugu@yahoo.com](mailto:sanpressenugu@yahoo.com)**



### Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Re-branding the Nigerian Culture: The Nsukka Masquerade Cult Example .....                                     | 1 – 10    |
| The Use of Music as Technique for Improving the Teaching and Learning of Oral English - - - - -                | 11 – 24   |
| Peace Paradigm for Nigeria and its Co-Existence - - - - -  | 25 – 34   |
| Verbal Morphology of Bassa Language - - - - -  | 35 – 46   |
| Religion, Land and Community Development in Nigeria - - - - -  | 47 – 56   |
| A.J. Ayer At The Service of African Languages: An Africanization of Linguistic Analysis - - - - -              | 57 – 64   |
| Culture and Language: The Video Format Paradigm for Transmitting Traditional Values                            | 65 – 76   |
| International Human Rights and Right to Culture: The Compatibility Question -                                  | 77 – 92   |
| Socio – Political and Psychological Ethos of Evaluation in Language Teaching and Learning in Nigeria - - - - - | 93 – 106  |
| Igbo-English Code switch or Engli'gbo: A Positive Perspective - - - - -  | 107 – 114 |
| Underpinning the Foolery Concept of OBJ and IBB: The Gricean Conversational Maxims Perspective - - - - -       | 115 – 132 |
| Homonymous Igbo Verbs - - - - -  | 133 – 148 |
| Climate Change as Interplay for Language, Culture and Environment: The Igbo Situation Study - - - - -          | 149 – 166 |
| Beauty in General Language Use in Relation to the Art Activity: An appraisal -                                 | 167 – 178 |
| Graphic Designs as Semiotics: A Study of Outdoor Advertising in Selected L.G.A. of Lagos State - - - - -       | 179 – 194 |
| The Philosophy of Reciprocity and the Experience of Widows in Nigeria - -                                      | 195 – 202 |
| The Symbiosis of Language and Culture in Mariama BA's So Long a Letter -                                       | 203 – 212 |
| Ethnography of Speaking in Igbo Culture Area - - - - -   | 213 – 224 |
| Understanding Cultural Diversity: The Austrian-Nigeria Experience -  | 225 – 236 |

**Graphic Designs As Semiotics:  
A Study of Outdoor Advertising In Selected Lga of Lagos State**

By

**Adeyemo, Julius A.**  
School of Communication,  
Lagos State University, Ojo.  
E-mail: [julabis4yu@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julabis4yu@yahoo.co.uk)

and

**Makinde, Solomon Olanrewaju (PhD)**  
Department of Language Arts and Social Science Education  
Faculty of Education,  
Lagos State University, Ojo  
E-Mail: [lanremakinde05@yahoo.com](mailto:lanremakinde05@yahoo.com)

**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to ascertain the use of graphic designs as semiotics in advertising messages particularly in outdoor advertising. It is also sought to establish whether graphic designs messages can be easily understood using both linguistic and semiotic strategies for effective understanding of outdoor advertising. The study examines whether graphic designs messages perform the advertising functions and the impact graphic designs has on message dissemination. The content analysis method was utilized to analyze the message content of selected billboard advertisements. A total of 18 billboard advertisements were randomly selected within the Ikeja-Ogba axis of Lagos state. All the selected billboards were carefully analyzed using semiotic strategies with a view to explicating the message intents of the advertisers. From our analyses, indeed, meanings are foregrounded in billboard advertising through the graphic designs.

**Introduction**

Semiotics also called semiology, confronts head on the question of how images make meanings. It is not simply descriptive, as compositional interpretation appears to be; nor



does it rely on quantitative estimations of significance, as content analysis at some level has to. Instead, semiotic offers a very full box of analytical tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning. Communication is a central activity that human life revolves around, a *sine qua non* to human existence, (Oyewo, 2000).

Semiotics is also influential as an approach to interpreting the materials of visual culture because it draws upon the work of several major theorists whose impact on the social sciences since the 1960s have been immense.

The most important tool in any semiological box, though, is the 'sign': semiotics means "the study of signs". As Mielke and Norman (1991) say in their defence of semiology, human culture busy themselves making sense of these signs. Semiology has an elaborate analytical vocabulary for describing how signs make sense, and this is one of its major strengths. A semiological analysis entails the deployment of a highly refined set of concepts which produce detailed accounts of the exact ways the meanings of an image are produced through that image. Semiology offers a certain kind of analytical precision. Arens (2003) argues that one of the most influential ideological forms in contemporary capitalist societies is **advertising**. She claims that advertisements are ubiquitous and thus appears autonomous, so that they have a sort of independent reality that links them to our own lives Goldman (1992), observes that:

advertisements saturates our lives... because advertisements are so persuasive and our reading of them so routine, we tend to take for granted the deep social assumptions embedded in advertisements we do not ordinarily recognize them as a sphere of ideology.

Graphics in advertisements are designed to attract customers. Typically, the advertiser has only zero second to grab the reader's attention. Indeed, studies of advertisement readership show that 85 percent of advertisements do not even get looked at as Arens (2003) observes. They also show virtually no relationship between how much the advertisers spend and how well the advertisement is recalled. But the quality of the advertising is important while good design does not only command attention but holds it. Good design also communicates as much information as possible in the shortest amount of time and makes the message easier to understand.

One might like to combine them, but there are some thorny incompatibilities between them. Peircian semiotics also needs a bridge to graphic design, but there is not the critical mass of people within graphic design to build it, and no one can build it for them. Graphic designers are largely averse to theory and the scholarly publications that could establish and develop a semiotic that would be appropriate to graphic design.

**Graphic Designs As Semiotics:  
A Study of Outdoor Advertising In Selected Lga of Lagos State**

By

**Adeyemo, Julius A.**  
School of Communication,  
Lagos State University, Ojo.  
E-mail: [julabis4yu@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julabis4yu@yahoo.co.uk)

and

**Makinde, Solomon Olanrewaju (PhD)**  
Department of Language Arts and Social Science Education  
Faculty of Education,  
Lagos State University, Ojo  
E-Mail: [lanremakinde05@yahoo.com](mailto:lanremakinde05@yahoo.com)

**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to ascertain the use of graphic designs as semiotics in advertising messages particularly in outdoor advertising. It is also sought to establish whether graphic designs messages can be easily understood using both linguistic and semiotic strategies for effective understanding of outdoor advertising. The study examines whether graphic designs messages perform the advertising functions and the impact graphic designs has on message dissemination. The content analysis method was utilized to analyze the message content of selected billboard advertisements. A total of 18 billboard advertisements were randomly selected within the Ikeja-Ogba axis of Lagos state. All the selected billboards were carefully analyzed using semiotic strategies with a view to explicating the message intents of the advertisers. From our analyses, indeed, meanings are foregrounded in billboard advertising through the graphic designs.

**Introduction**

Semiotics also called semiology, confronts head on the question of how images make meanings. It is not simply descriptive, as compositional interpretation appears to be; nor



Semiotics and semiology are very much alive and used elsewhere. Semiology was a part of graphic design for much of the last century. It has provided a continuing critical base for social theory, deconstruction and "the interpretive turn" in the humanities. Semiotics is used in technical communication and semiotic concepts are used in human factors to decompose and analyze interpretation. Semiotics can serve as a framework to unify quickly developing but scattered literatures in naturalistic thinking as they are relevant to design.

### Statement of Problems

It can be seen that graphic designs is a tool employed by advertisers in disseminating messages across to its target audiences. It is not a new concept in advertising, but it is not easily understood by most people. Hence, there is a need to examine how graphic designs can effectively be used as appropriate vehicle of communication in outdoor advertising.

### Research Questions

- (1) How has design been in consonance with content in outdoor advertising?
- (2) How well do people understand graphic design messages on billboards?
- (3) How has design performed its advertising functions in billboards?

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins this study are the Eco's Theory of Semiotics and codes (1976) and Saussure's theory of semiotics (1916). The theories postulate that the meaning of signals or signs is determined by the objects (i.e. things or events) to which they refer, and is a rejection of the notion that 'iconic' signs must be likeness of their objects. Eco (1976) argues that the meaning of signals or signs is not necessarily determined by whether they refer to actual objects. He explains further that the existence of objects to which signals or signs may correspond is not a necessary condition for their signification. Eco (1976) also criticizes the notion that a typology of signs may clarify the nature of sign function. Instead, that any typology of signs may fail to explain how different kinds of signs may share the same modes of production. Eco (1976) thus argues that the correct approach to developing a unified semiotic theory should not be to propose a typology of signs but should be to provide a method of investigating how sign-vehicles may function as signs and to provide a means of understanding how sign-vehicles may be produced and interpreted.

Communication is made possible by the existence of a code, or by a system of signification. Without a code or a system of signification, there is no set of rules to determine how the expression of signs is to be correlated with their content. The use of a



code or a system of signification in order to correlate the expression and content of signs may be necessary in order to establish any form of communication.

Another theory to be looked into is the Saussure's (1916) theory of semiotics which underscores how signs in language actually acquire their meaning. Saussure (1916) argues that there is an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified of a sign, as evidence in the fact that different languages have very different words for the same phenomenon. This signifies the divide of world into categories of content. These categories, or ideas of how the world is ordered, are not always dictated by the physical realities themselves; they are often culturally specific. For instance, the colour category 'brown' does not exist in certain cultures, and the colour that we now call 'orange' and then a couple of centuries ago its name began to be applied to a particular part of the spectrum had always existed. What change was the fact that people began to name it and, in doing so, started to recognize it as a colour in its own right.

## Literature Review

### Graphic Design

The term graphic design refers to how the art director and graphic artist (or graphic designer) choose and structure the artistic elements on an advertisement. A designer sets a style-the manner in which a thought or image is expressed-by choosing particular artistic elements and blending them in a unique way, (Arens, 2003). Graphics can be functional or artistic. The latter can be a recorded version, such as a photograph, or an interpretation by a scientist to highlight essential features, or an artist, in which case the distinction with imaginary graphics may become blurred. Graphic design is also a collaborative process between a client and a designer - in conjunction with producers of form (i.e., printers, programmers, sign makers, etc.) - To convey a specific message to a targeted audience. The term "graphic design" can also refer to a number of artistic and professional disciplines that focus on visual communication and presentation. The field is also often referred to as Visual Communication or Communication Design. Various methods are used to create and combine words, symbols, and images to create a visual representation of ideas and messages. Pierce (1898), Saussure (1916), Morris (1971), Eco (1976), Paul (1998).

A graphic designer may use typography, visual arts and page layout techniques to produce the final result. Graphic design often refers to both the process (designing) by which the communication is created and the products (designs) which are generated. Common uses of graphic design include identity (logos and branding), web sites, publications (magazines, newspapers, and books), advertisements and product packaging.



For example, a product package might include a logo or other artwork, organized text and pure design elements such as shapes and color which unify the piece. Composition is one of the most important features of graphic design, especially when using pre-existing materials or diverse elements.

*The Encyclopedia of Semiotics* Paul (1998) states that, for designers to be aware of semiotics, or to apply it, means to understand, in addition to technological, social, physical, and other aspects, that the sign process embodied in design continues in the use of what was designed. These forces into the equation of design the future user as a component of the design semiosis.

Design and design products can be interpreted as signs. But as products, regardless of their concrete realization, they are *not* semiotic entities, but rather the result of human needs and desires. Accordingly, while the symbolism of a certain design might be an important factor in the user's decision to buy it, the most important factor will be the product's performance. This raises the issue of design value and criteria for evaluation. During the documented history of design, various criteria were acknowledged: formal qualities, utility, functionality, adaptability, among others.

The semiotic functions of design – its practicality, aesthetics, the theoretic aspect, and the symbolism ascertained through the convention of design – were suggested from a structuralist-based dualistic semiotics (elaborated by Mukarovsky). Taking process into consideration, these functions need to be complemented by heuristics (the inquisitive aspect of design interaction), cognition (what we learn in interacting with designed artifacts), and expressivity (the originality of design). If we look at design as applied semiotics, then design is, in the final analysis, the process through which signs appropriate to intended contexts of interpretation and use are generalized and integrated in new practical experiences. Contemporary design expresses this new condition in many ways, making extensive use of new technologies in order to model various contexts.

## Semiotics

There are two major traditions in modern semiotic theory. One branch is grounded in a European tradition and was led by the Swiss-French linguist Saussure (1916). The other branch emerged out of American pragmatic philosophy by its primary founder, Peirce (1898). Saussure sought to explain how all elements of a language are taken as components of a larger system of language in use. This led to a formal discipline which he called semiology. Peirce's interest in logical reasoning led him to investigate different categories of signs and the manner by which we extract meaning from them.



Independently, Saussure and Peirce worked to better understand the triadic relationship between physical signs, the objects to which they refer, and the human interpreter.

The smallest unit of analysis in Saussure's semiology is the sign made up of a signifier or sensory pattern, and a signified, the concept that is elicited in the mind by the signifier. Saussure emphasized that the signifier does not constitute a sign until it is interpreted. Like Plato, Saussure recognized the arbitrary association between a word and what it stands for. Word selection becomes a matter, not of identity, but of difference. Differences carry signification. A sign is what all other signs are not (Saussure, 1916).

Peirce (1898) shared the Saussurian observation that most signs are symbolic and arbitrary, but he called attention to iconic signs that physically resemble their referent and indexical signs that possess a logical connection to their referent Peirce (1898). To Peirce, the relationship of the sign to the object is made in the mind of the interpreter as a mental tool which Peirce called the 'interpretant'. As Peirce describes it, semiosis (the process of sign interpretation) is an iterative process involving multiple inferences. The signifier elicits in the mind an 'interpretant' which is not the final signified object, but a mediating thought that promotes understanding. In other words, a thought is a sign requiring interpretation by a subsequent thought in order to achieve meaning.

This mediating thought might be a schema, a mental model, or a recollection of prior experience that enables the subject to move forward toward understanding. The 'interpretant' itself becomes a sign that can elicit yet another interpretant, leading the way toward an infinite series of unlimited semioses Eco (1976). By this analysis, Peirce shifts the focus of semiotics from a relational view of signs and the objects they represent to an understanding of semiosis as an iterative, mediational process.

An important concept in semiotics is that signs and meaning are unlimited. Called "unlimited semiosis," this principle makes it clear that one sign or set of signs can take the place of some other sign or set of signs in a theoretically infinite process. If this were not possible, then artists would eventually run out of signs with which to carry meaning, and that would be the end of art itself. Morris (1971) was a semiotician who adapted Peirce's work to a form of behaviorism derived from the influence of his teacher, George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). For Morris, semiotics involves goal-seeking behavior in which signs exercise control, Morris, (1971) identified four aspects within the process of semiosis:

1. The sign vehicle which orients a person toward a goal,
2. The interpreter, or the subject of the semiotic activity,
3. The designatum, or the object to which the sign refers, and



4. The 'interpretant', which is the cognitive reaction elicited in the mind of the interpreter (Morris, 1971: 19, 38).

Semiotics is probably best-known as an approach to textual analysis, and in this form it is characterized by a concern with structural analysis. Structuralist therefore does a semiotic analysis which involves identifying the constituent units in a semiotic system (such as a text or socio-cultural practice) and the structural relationships between them (oppositions, correlations and logical relations).

### What is Signs?

We seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meanings: above all, we are surely Homo significans - meaning-makers. Distinctively, we make meanings through our creation and interpretation of 'signs'. Indeed, according to Peirce, 'we think only in signs' Peirce (1898). Signs take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. 'Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign', declares Peirce (1898). Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as 'signifying' something - referring to or standing for something other than itself. We interpret things as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of conventions. It is this meaningful use of signs which is at the heart of the concerns of semiotics.

The two dominant models of what constitutes a sign are those of the linguist Saussure and the philosopher Peirce. These we will be discussing in turn. Saussure offered a 'dyadic' or two-part model of the sign. He defined a sign as being composed of:

- a 'signifier' (signifiant) - the form which the sign takes; and
- The 'signified' (signifié) - the concept it represents.

The sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified Saussure (1916). The relationship between the signifier and the signified is referred to as 'signification', and this is represented in the Saussurean diagram by the arrows. The horizontal line marking the two elements of the sign is referred to as 'the bar'.

If we take a linguistic example, the word 'Open' (when it is invested with meaning by someone who encounters it on a shop doorway) is a sign consisting of:

- A signifier: the word open;
- A signified concept: that the shop is open for business.



A sign must have both a signifier and a signified. You cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a completely formless signified

### Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising is the oldest established form of advertising, and evidence of its use has been found in Greek and Roman remains. This is not surprising because, even in those days public announcements had to be made, and wall was as good as a place as any on which to carve a message. Today, outdoor advertising has seen innovations such as the illuminated bus-shelter poster (ADSHEL); the moving, illuminated newscaster, spelling out its message high up on a building; or the spangled flutter signs, common in Asiatic cities, which are now to be seen in London. It is applicable and creditable of note that outdoor as an advertising communication tool also employ graphic designs as a means of communicating messages.

You cannot become perfect in advertising if you do not know how to relate with your target audience either by oral or written communication. The message in which outdoor relayed to its target audience is aimed to be understood by the recipients. Outdoor is a medium of advertising which is used for exhibition displays. It is used as a directional sign or for advert at a particular venue – for awareness which is known as advertising. It is called outdoor advertising because it was first produced by a company known as Roller up.

As a medium, outdoor are advertisements placed upon structures along major transport routes and at places where people converge. They rely upon colour, pictures and a few words to convey a message. After delivering the message in its desired form or size, the medium is no way responsible for securing reading or attention to the message which is the responsibility of the advertiser Arens (2003). We adopted these theories because the signals, signs and symbols on billboards are indeed needed to understand the intentions of advert copy writers.

In summary, for effective meaning explication of graphic designs in billboard advertisements the signs i.e. the wording may not have much impact on the readers as the symbols or the graphics which often make a lasting impression on the readers.

### Methodology

The sample population of this study was limited to the billboards advertisements randomly selected within the Ikeja/Ogba axis of Lagos state. The bill board advertisements of various products therefore formed the subject of the research study.



### Research Instrument

Since the study is based on content analysis, it focuses on outdoor advertising, to elicit information about the problem of the study. Meanwhile, certain outdoor advertisements (billboards) were selected at different location of Ikeja/Ogba axis and the content of the messages were analyzed in order to answer the set questions stated below:

- (1) How has design been in consonance with content in outdoor advertising?
- (2) How well do people understand graphic design messages on billboards?
- (3) How has design performed its advertising functions in billboards?

### Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

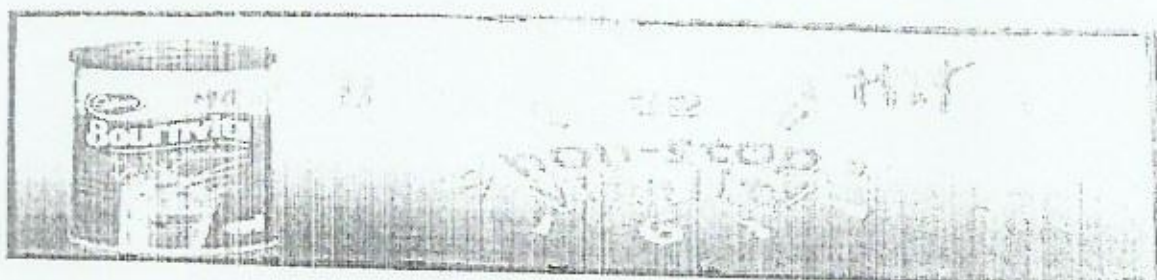
- (1) How has graphic designs been in consonance with content in outdoor advertising?

#### The New Face of Happiness (Maltina)



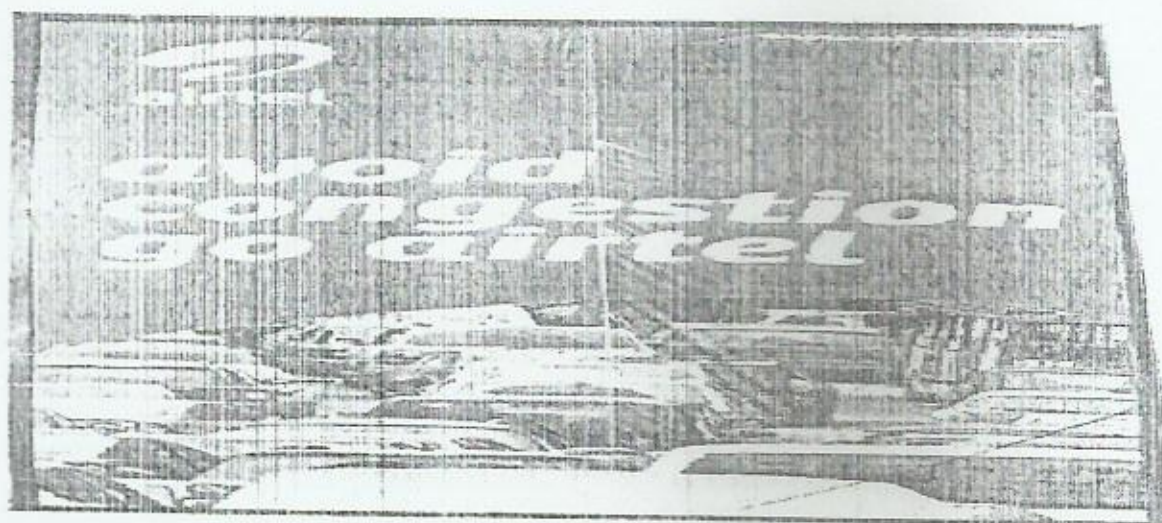
The Maltina bottle and the Maltina can with newly designed label stand for 'The new face' and what people have been deriving from the product (Maltina) stands for 'happiness'. The picture of the product is a perfect illustration of the advertising message 'The new face of happiness'. The new designed label of the product represents or connotes the message the 'new face' while the content of the product Maltina which is still the same in taste and value connotes the meaning 'happiness'. In other words, the 'new face', signified by the product's new designed label, becomes the signifier.

### Non-Stop Vitality (Bournvita)



In the illustration, we have the product bournvita, a clock and different set of people reflection, engaging in different sporting activities. The clock and the reflection of people engaging in the sporting activities stand for 'non-stop vitality'. The point of this advertising message is to present bournvita as a food drink that provides all the essential nutrients for daily activities. The 'non-stop', signified by the clock and people engaging in different sporting activities, becomes the signifier and the 'vitality' signified by the product bournvita also becomes the signifier.

### Avoid Congestion Go Airtel (Airtel)



In this advertisement, we have a traffic jam situation where motorists are on hold. The traffic jam situation stands for congestion. The picture is a unique illustration of the message 'avoid congestion go airtel'. The meaning of traffic congestion is to show the need for using airtel network rather than other network that is too jam packed and congested with minimum services. In other words, 'avoid congestion', signified by the traffic jam situation, becomes the signifier.



**(2) How well do people understand graphic design messages on billboards?**

At this point, the qualitative research technique was adopted for obtaining in-depth responses to how people think and feel. Some certain people were selected for interview at the Ikeja-Ogba area where the billboards are being selected.

**We Have Tried Omo and it Worked.**



According to a male participant and a female participant on the advertisement, the following information are retrieved from them as their responses.

Facilitator: do you understand the above graphic design used in the advertising message?

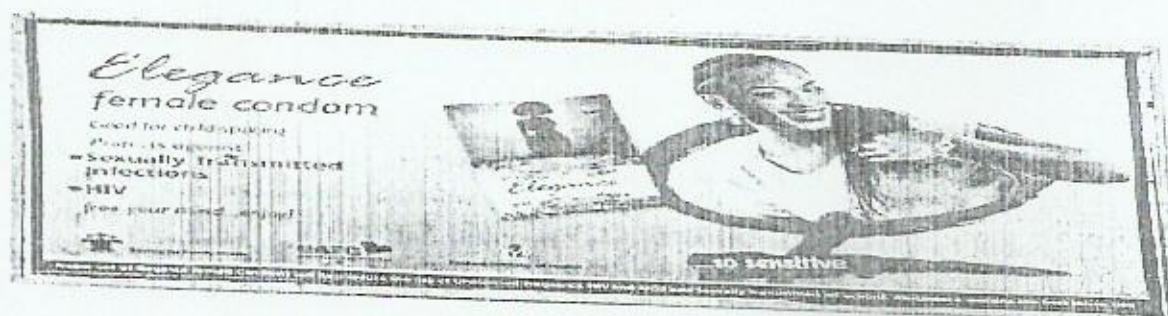
Male participant: I do see the billboard on a regular basis and what I feel is that, the illustration used on the billboard is already passing the intended message whereby people are demonstrating how effective OMO is on tough stains. Female participant: the OMO billboard advert seems very simple and easy to understand because the headline 'we have tried OMO and it worked' is simply illustrated by people who are trying to see how effective OMO is on stains in a door-to-door challenge.

**Some Things are Without Equal (Guinness)**



Male participant: it is confusing because I did not really get the message at first until when I pondered over it again and again then found out that the Guinness extra stout message is talking about more in volume and richer in content than its competitors. Female participant: I do see the billboard advert but always not paying attention to it because I don't drink the product. What I feel the advert message is trying to convey is that Guinness is not the same as every other brand in its brand segment. Another male participant concluded that the Guinness advert is easily understood by him. He proceeded by saying that the advert is trying to tell its intended audience that the product is richer in quality, more in its content and also is perceived as the best in the stout brands.

### Elegance Female Condom



According to another male respondent around the Ogba area where the billboard advertisement is located gave his own understanding on what the advert means.

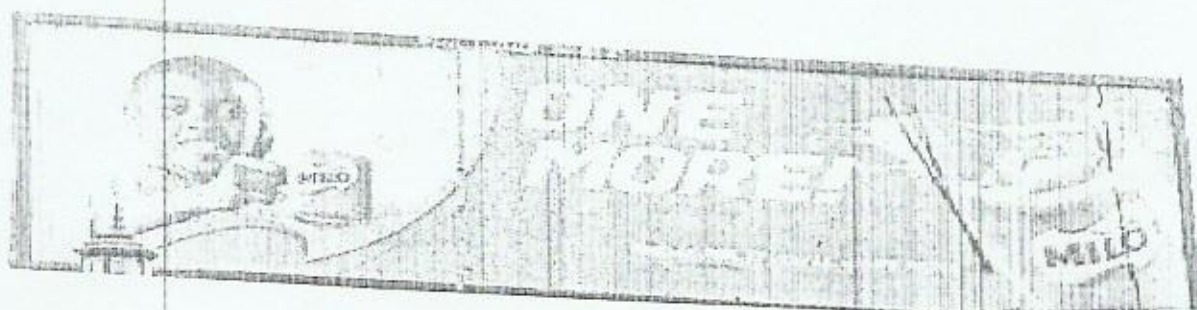
Male participant: although have not seen a female condom before, but getting to see this billboard makes me to know that for real, female condom exists. My own understanding of the advertising messages is that the woman illustrated represents fulfillment and approval of the Elegance Female Condom which is good in the area of child spacing, protection against sexual transmitted infections and HIV. Female participant: the advertisement to my understanding is simply saying that, the condom helps in child spacing, protection against sexually transmitted infections and HIV. I also see that the woman smiling represents satisfaction since the message is telling us that the condom is 'so sensitive'.

### (3) How has design performed its advertising functions in billboards?

Here we shall look at the above research question in term of persuasion, awareness and rebranding.



### One More! (Milo)



In this advertisement, it can be seen that there is a presentation of 'New Milo' with an illustration of a young boy stretching forth a mug with Milo inscription. The picture of the boy stretching forth the Milo mug in his hand stands for 'One More!' depicting the yawning for more great taste of Milo. This advertisement can be seen as performing a persuasion function whereby the message content 'One More' depict by yawning for more great taste is hereby encouraging its intended audience to go for the 'New Milo'. This advertisement also performs the function of rebranding and awareness. The product in the advertisement is presented as 'New Milo' where creating an awareness for an improved product and also rebranding because the message content is introducing the product as 'New Milo'.

### The New Face of Happiness (Maltina)



The Maltina bottle and Maltina Can drink with newly designed label stand for 'New Face' which is presented in bold faces and what the people have been deriving from the product. Maltina stands for 'happiness'. This advertisement also performs the advertising function of persuasion, awareness and rebranding. The 'New Face' used in the content of the advertising message represented by the new designed label performs the rebranding and the awareness function whereby the intended audience are made aware of change in brand design but same in content. Also, the 'happiness' use in the message content of the advertising message represented by the product Maltina performs the persuasion function.



One and The Same, Same Taste, Same Filling New Wrap (Beefie)



This advertisement presents the product Beefie in its new wrap. The graphic design used in this advertisement is unique to the product and complements the word 'one and the same, same taste, same filling, New Wrap' in the sense that, the advertising message shows that Beefie, despite introducing the new wrap is still the same Beefie, same taste and same filling of the Beef inside it.

The graphic design used in this advertising message performs its advertising functions of awareness, persuasion and rebranding. Persuasion in the sense of encouraging its intended audience to continue patronizing as the taste remains the same; the filling remains the same despite the 'New Wrap'.

Awareness and rebranding function of the advertising is that the design is that the product is presented with a 'New Wrap' which is used to inform the target audience of change in design.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study show that the distinction between the signifier and the signified can help us understand the structure of designs in advertisements. According to Goldman (1992) and Williamson (1978), advert works by transferring (or trying to transfer) visual and textual signified into their product. Thus, the signs in advertisement's image and writing usually signify notions of taste, luxury, happiness, health and so on and adverts attempt to shift the signifiers from the signs in the image and text to their own product.

Williamson (1978) also argues that the most productive aspects of analysis of images in precisely the way it shows how advertisement work by shifting signified from one signifier to another. This statement can be related to the findings in the 'Elegance female condom' where we have an image of a happy looking lady. The happy looking lady which is the signified can be shifted from one signifier to another. The happy looking lady signifies that the product is a female condom, a free minded woman who is not



bothered about sexually transmitted infections and HIV and also, a desire fulfilled in the area of child spacing.

This can also be related to Omo advertisement where we have different people raising up sparkling white clothes. This illustration which is the signified can be shifted from one signifier to another. The people raising up sparkling white clothes signifies 'we have tried Omo and it worked' and also signifies 'Omo door-to-door stains challenge'.

Williamson (1978) also discussed how the relationships between the signs in advert, have meaningful effects. Using two perfumes adverts, one of Chanel and one of Babe Williamson (1978). Williamson quickly noted how the signified attached to the two women are transferred within the adverts from the women to the perfumes they are advertising.

### Conclusion

The problem of using the right designs, pictures, colours, fonts and so on is a fundamental problem that could cause ineffective advertising messages, especially when it comes to advertisements that has to make use of graphic designs. Many advertisements today have it that, meaning associated with imagery were consistently discrepant and led to divergent interpretations of the billboards.

Semiotics therefore provides the foundation according to which we can develop an understanding of branding and messaging through determining interpretation by the reader. Graphic designs in advertising should aim at ensuring that when designing an advertising campaign that the meanings are clear to the target audience that they are trying to reach. The specific interpretation that the design seeks and the action that the designer wants the readers to undertake needs to be foregrounded. We can therefore conclude that there is a strong relationship between signs in adverts and their semiotic signification.



## References

- Arens W. (2003); *Contemporary advertising, (10th edition)*: The McGraw-hill Companies, Inc.
- Chandler, D. (2002). *Semiotics: The basics*. London: Routledge.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A theory of semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Eco, U. (1976). *The role of the reader: Explorations in the semiotics of texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Mark J. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Leinke, J. (1990). *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing.
- Morris, C. (1971). *Foundations of the theory of signs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Paul B. (1998) (Ed). *The encyclopedia of semiotics*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pierce, C. S. (1898). Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs. In Bucher (Ed). *Philosophical writings of peirce*. New York: Dover, (1955).
- Saussure, F. (1916). *Course in general linguistics*. Bally & Sechehaye (Trans). New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.