

Cure for weak manhood: A persuasive euphemism strategies in selected Nigerian herbal medicines advertisements

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Abstract

The study examined herbal medicines advertising discourse as unique terms of depicting weak manhood euphemistically in order not to sound vulgar. Twelve advertisements (ads) served as the data of investigation. The data were taken from Facebook advertisements (both texts and images) and analyzed from the purviews of Barthesian denotative and connotative annotations, Halliday's transitivity concepts, and critical discourse analysis. This study aims to examine how weak manhood is portrayed, the ideology behind its portrayal, and the persuasive techniques used in the ads. The study revealed concealments in form of sexual satisfaction (e.g. next match, lasting gbola, bigga gbola, better something, leg shaking) and power/activeness (e.g. big carrot, strongest bamboo, Manpower, 45 mins, inner chamber, excellence in the other room, power to do more, and extra time/large). The study suggested that further researches to analyze from a multimodal perspective on how different visual and linguistic choices deployed in the herbal cure for weak manhood ads contribute to the euphemistic and persuasive import of taboo-related advertising. Again, however acceptable euphemistic expressions may be in certain context; they are considered too explicit, pinged with negative connotation and therefore create war among readers.

Keywords: advertising, herbal medicines, connotations, denotations, *gbola*, euphemism.

Cura para masculinidade fraca: estratégias de eufemismo persuasivo em anúncios selecionados de medicamentos fitoterápicos nigerianos

Resumo

O estudo examinou o discurso publicitário de medicamentos fitoterápicos como termos únicos para retratar a masculinidade fraca de forma eufemística para não soar vulgar. Doze propagandas (ads) serviram como dados de investigação. Os dados foram retirados de anúncios do Facebook (textos e imagens) e analisados a partir das anotações denotativas e conotativas barthesianas, dos conceitos de transitividade de Halliday e da análise crítica do discurso. Este estudo tem como objetivo examinar como a masculinidade fraca é retratada, a ideologia por trás de sua representação e as técnicas persuasivas usadas nos anúncios. O estudo revelou ocultações na forma de satisfação sexual (p. espaço, poder para fazer mais e tempo extra/grande). O estudo sugeriu que novas pesquisas para analisar de uma perspectiva multimodal sobre como diferentes escolhas visuais e linguísticas implantadas nos anúncios de cura à base de ervas para masculinidade fraca contribuem para a importação eufemística e persuasiva da publicidade relacionada a tabus. Novamente, por mais aceitáveis que sejam as expressões eufemísticas em determinado contexto; eles são considerados muito explícitos, com conotação negativa e, portanto, criam guerra entre os leitores.

Palavras-chave: publicidade, fitoterápicos, conotações, denotações, *gbola*, eufemismo.

1. Introduction

Gone are the days when herbal medicines could not get to wider audience. Advertisement in technology makes it possible for herbal advertisement (hereafter: ad) to spread across the globe. An ad serves as a means or an interface between the producers of goods and services, and consumers. It enables the manufacturers to encircle

recipients with appropriate means of fascinating resources of conviction (Packard, 1977). The resources used in ad help in influencing the human senses of hearing and perception. Ads feature element of persuasion which could be written signs and symbols to present to consumers the products they intend to sell. In order not to breach the law restricting the use of vulgar words or expressions in advertising, advertisers use an indirect method in advertising their products. This is done through euphemism. It serves a useful purpose in advertisers' domain to motivate the audience to consumption.

In herbal medicine ads, text and image are important in advertising plates (Sells; Gonzalez, 2003). In advertising plates, advertisers do not just use text and image anyhow, and they are used to help each other in presenting intended message(s). The text and image in the advertising semantic field, therefore, promote goods and services. In an attempt to persuade consumers, advertisers structure the text and image in such a way that they create a metaphorical domain for a product.

The text and image perform fundamental role of conceptual networks of production. In order not to sound vulgar, advertisers make use of euphemism to present information about their products. Therefore, herbal medicine ads use euphemism, which is a so-called politically correct language which conforms to beliefs about correctness in language with regard to sexism, racism and aging (Burridge, 2004, p. 206).

In the genre of advertising, communicators apply euphemism consciously to engage consumers on the new products. In the context of herbal medicines ads on cure for weak manhood, most words or expressions could sound vulgar and stand against the customs and tradition of advertising code of conduct. The advertisers choose words or expressions which make use of the code replacement that operate in professional conducts, cultural norms, religious issues, ceremonial activities, etc (Salami, 2013, p. 4).

It is the responsibility of advertisers to use messages that conform to socio-cultural norms (Ewen, 1976; Fiske, 1989; Hermerén, 1999). It therefore corroborates Gomez's (2009) argument that a linguistic euphemism can be labeled as euphemism "through a certain context and given situation" when "the real sense of its intentions and it functions as a communicative function of language."

Ad professionals use words or expressions that may sound impolite in a polite way so that they will be free from 'dispreffered expressions' (Allan; Burridge, 1991; Hoffman, 1967; Brown; Levinson, 1987; MCGlone; Batchelor, 2003). Cure for weak manhood ads has its distinctive features that make them different from others in one way or another (Brierley, 1995). In advertising generally, advertisers avoid the repetition of the word 'buy' (Forceville, 1996) just to bring ingenuity to renew communication strengths. Similarly, advertisers believe that presenting unpleasant things the way it is may not necessarily convince the consumers to buy their products but try to avoid offensive-cum-taboo constructions in their ad plates.

It is clear from the above remarks that the use of euphemism serves as a means of persuasion. Therefore, the study taps its currency of analyzing euphemisms (Pfaff, 1997; Dominguez; Benedito, 2000) from the above perspectives to demonstrate the behaviors of the advertising industry towards euphemisms especially in the context of Nigerian herbal medicines ads.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Euphemism in herbal ads

Going by the etymology of euphemism, it is clear that English lexemes exhibit some relationship. Some of these words are related to wars, upheaval, neologism, and cultural transmissions (Fromkin, 2003), and the other ones are linked to scientific inventions, invasions and perhaps, a desire to be different (Algeo; Pyles, 2002).

In order for communicators to talk indirectly, they resort to the use of euphemism. According to Radulovic (2012), the sensitivity of communicators to indirect expressions in diverse eco-social domains, influences him (Radulovic) to classify roundabout expressions into orthothemism and dysphemism. Here, the categorization deals with the conveying meaning from a source to another in an implicit form or shape either as a positive resemblance or negative marker. Both notion of positive (euphemism) and negative (dysphemism) euphemisms are relevant in the genre of advertising communication. Although Kroll, 1984; Allan & Burridge, 2006 opined that there is a thin line between euphemism and dysphemism; the two of them can be used in the same euphemistic framework. The little difference between euphemism and dysphemism is in their engagement in realizing social values. Euphemistic expressions - euphemism or dysphemism, are linked to social communicative facilities. The use of euphemistic expressions therefore, is mild and it can be used with a varied expression to substitute in appropriate vocabulary (Holder, 2002, p. 118).

In the context of herbal medicine ads, unpleasant words or expressions are used as metaphors in advertising herbal medicine products that serve as a cure for man's weak erection. This corroborates Bolinger's (1987) submission that "[...] the misuse of one word for another that resembles it in sound and is vaguely similar in meaning." Advertising euphemism interpretation is context-dependent (Limfrot-Ham, 2005; 1992; Gómez, 2009). Advertising professionals make use of indefinite lexicons to attract the interest of consumers especially in Nigeria ('menh' for men; 'bangaa' for banger; 'rum' for room; etc).

Euphemism as a concept in literature, creates association with figures of speech (Allan, 2001; collocation (Zhou, 2015), political propaganda and public relations (Jackova, 2010), and manipulation of consumers that might lead to vagueness (Leech, 1966). Connecting those lines of defense to euphemism is an exposé of the behaviors of every language user, which is the motive for Bolinger (1987) to further posit "[...] euphemism is everyone's sin." Substitution and integration of lexemic conceptual network demonstrate the imaginative prowess of an interlocutor and in social contexts. Out of socio-cultural spheres, advertising creators euphemistically source material to sensitize recipients to products patronization. According to Myer's (1994), advertising experts achieve persuasion through euphemism, which is channeled through word connectives, behavioral associations, referent partnerships, and affiliation with narrators.

Few scholars have worked on various aspects of drugs advertising in Nigeria. For instance, Adibe et al. (2015) evaluated the physical characteristics and the completeness of information in drug package leaflets/inserts and drug promotional brochures in Nigeria. The findings revealed that advertising materials used in promoting drugs in Nigeria have incomplete information and the physical characteristics of the materials are not adequate. Bamgbose (n.d) carried out a discourse strategies employed by hawkers of drugs and books, who hawk on or by buses in Lagos. The findings revealed that the conjunctive adjuncts are mainly used because they serve as punching in the discourse of advertisement, and humor is used to achieve appealing effects on the buyers.

Momodua et al. (2020) assessed the extent of use of drug labels and advertisements as sources of drugs information by non-health care personnel in Lagos, South West, Nigeria. The findings revealed that pharmacists were the most consulted source for medicine information, followed by televisions, radio, Internet, literature inserts, and labels. Adegoju (2008) examined the persuasive strategies of advertising herbal medicine in southwestern Nigeria. Through rhetorical model of analysis, the findings reveal that there are no significant culture-specific strategies of advertising in the data sampled, as the communicative strategies generally fit in with the prefabricated style of advertising discourse.

From sex discourse, Mensah (2020a) questioned the motivations, ideologies and perceptions towards the phenomenon of transactional sex by two categories of its practitioners: the economically less privileged class and the privileged class. The findings concluded that transactional sex revolves around discourses of gratification, consumerism, choice and autonomy. Similarly, Mensah (2020b) examined the nuances, motivations and experiences of young women in Nigeria initiate heterosexual relationships with their choice of partners from the purview of ethnographic approach.

The findings reveal from linguistic evidence that young women find a source of empowerment and agency that challenges their stereotyped passive roles and break down gender barrier. Mensah & Inyabim (2016) studied how the use of metaphor as a primary medium of the discourse of sex and sexuality present the ideology in the construction of multiethnic identities and transformation of individual social relationships within and outside group memberships. The study concluded that the cross-fertilization of gender ideologies, social pressure and transgression of hegemonic ideological practices help to emphasize youth as social and cultural actors. Again, Mensah & Nkamigbo (2016) explore the use of sexual metaphors as slang spoken by youth in Nigeria from the purview of Lakoff & Turner's (1989) conceptual metaphor theory (CMT).

The findings reveal that young people use lexically and contextually driven sexually explicit relation within their social universe and group dynamics. Aboh (2015) examines euphemistic expressions from the selected Nigerian novels to see how characters deploy politeness strategies to lessen the effect of an expression that might be termed threatening to the hearer. The findings reveal four (4) categories of sex euphemisms (sex as movement/journey, sex as food, sex as a biological process of maturity and the sex organ as a manipulative object) in the novel. In addition, Ajayi & Okeke (2019) study gender differences in protective sexual behaviors and the influences of family support and living with both parents.

The results show that the largest proportion of the participants engaged in productive sexual behaviors. Allan (2007) investigates the implementation of a targeted HIV/STI prevalence study, structured focus groups incorporating anonymous questionnaires which were conducted with members of this population in secure locations in Nigeria. The findings suggest that immediate action is vital to mitigate the impact of HIV and other

STIs. Tade & Adekoya (2012) examine transactional sex and aristocratic phenomenon from 30 purposively selected female undergraduates in Nigeria. The findings reveal that the prostitution label is substituted for 'run-girls', as a distinct social category.

Fakoya (2007) studies some 'offensive' Yorùbá proverbs that are geared at facing if the production of bawdy imagery can cause conversation to over balance, whether the conversational value of such proverbs is sufficient for interlocutors to ignore their 'distastefulness.' While Olateju (2009) examines the language of herbal medicine practitioners from a sociolinguistic-stylistic perspective. He reveals that the language style employed in advertising Yorùbá traditional herbal medicines include traditional oral materials such as songs, incantation and also praise poetry which he uses to discuss the ailments and their symptoms. Therefore, this study sets out to focus on this neglected area of study.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on Barthesian denotative and connotative annotation, Halliday's Transitivity concepts, and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Signification plays a fundamental role in social semiotics, by connecting the functions to the environment. It is a process that binds the signifier and the signified (Barthes, 1967). The first order in relation to the scope of the study is a sign constructed within signifier and signified domains. According to Dalamu (2018), second level is appreciated as denotation and connotation. Barthes (1957) sees denotation as the first order of signification. Here, denotation focuses on the simple or literal relationship of a sign to the references, signifier and signified. Denotation helps with the relation between signifier and signified producing the explicit meaning. Panofsky (1970) proposes denotation as a representational visual image that all viewers from any culture and at any time would recognize the image as depicting.

From the explanation above, it shows that the meaning of denotation can be defined as the initial meaning of a sign, text, and so on. Denotation is a common sense thing through the meaning of a sign. In the words of Chandler (2012), sign is something that refers to another object outside itself. This shows that a sign is an illustration of an object in which human beings device meanings. The signifier and the signified associate with the concept of sign (Saussure, 1916/1983).

Hence, sign is a plane through which the signifier and the signified function in relation to a social context. Dyer (2005, p. 118) sees signifier as "[...] a material vehicle and the signified as "a mental concept or reference." We can argue that signifier comprises either visual or auditory communicative object in the social system such as text, image and sound; while the signified indicates the meaning abstraction from the signified. The meaning is therefore decoded from the text, the image or the sound.

Connotation is the second order of signification which comprises signifier and signified (Barthes, 1967, p. 91). The first (denotation) and second (connotation) are inextricably intertwined because the former serves as the first-order of meaning generation from a sign system or a code, while the latter expounds the meaning of an entity within the second-order of meaning derivative (Hjelmslev, 1961). We can say that the interpretation of euphemistic expressions is based on the thought and tradition of the people. In support of Fiske's submission above, connotation is seen as a socio-cultural and personal association of the sign (Chandler, 2002). While denotative meaning of a sign corresponds to the external reality, connotative meaning deals with associations (Connolly; Lain, 2002).

Although scholars (Barthes, 1967; Fiske, 1982) show their views on the order of signification, it is obvious that both denotation and connotation reflect cultural and ideological undertones. The use of socio-cultural and ideological undertones is applicable to images and their functional applications (Kress, 2010). The images are in form of pictorial metaphor which birthed a fair number of theoretical studies (Kennedy, 1993, 1982; Forceville, 2002a, 2000, 1999a, 1988; Carroll, 1996, 1994; Whittock, 1990; Kapla, 1992; Danto, 1993; Rozik, 1994; 1998; Maalej, 2001, 2008; Cupchick, 2003; El Refaie, 2003).

These studies are exceptional in their experiential findings. Advertisers are conscious of making use of threatening words or expressions in order for them not to be termed taboos. Therefore, they carefully choose words or expressions that will suit their readers based on cultural, social, and ideological expositions. Advertising therefore makes use of positive claim about a product or service (Forceville, 1996, p. 103). There lies demarcation between denotation and connotation, and the former exemplifies meaning at literal level and the latter explores meaning at the metaphorical/multiple level (Wullemen, 1994). In the same vein, Forceville (1996, p. 104) submits that in a given context, metaphor belongs to different categories, where one of these terms can be construed as the "literal" target and the other as the "figurative" source.

In addition, the third concept, which is the linguistic text, plays either the anchoring or relating role (Barthes, 1967). It is based on this third level that Forceville (1996) argues that the explanations of image can be subjective, while that of the text is objective. Using theoretical triangulation, we adopt the Transitivity System as textual processor of the selected advertising communications. According to Halliday (1973, p. 134), transitivity is the set of options available to the speaker whereby he encodes his experience of the processes of the external world and of the internal world of his own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances.

Transitivity features ideational metafunction which consist of experiential and logical relations (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In experiential relation, there are three predominant variables, that is, participant, process and circumstance (Dalamu, 2017b). According to Thompson (2014), participant is seen as being made up of either animate or inanimate elements, which are involved in meaning-making.

Goings-on concerns the activity the participant engages in as internal (thoughts, beliefs, feelings, etc) or external (happening, doing, sensing, etc) world (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). In the words of Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the experience shared by the participant might sometimes occur in a particular setting. Similarly, the glossing of circumstantial devices augments that information (Rose, 2013; Fontaine, 2013) that the participant and process provide the audience (Eggins, 2004).

Critical discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language and society. It is a form of discourse analysis that explores the opaque relationships causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes (Fairclough, 1993). CDA, according to Van Dijk (2003), reveals the source of power abuse, dominance, inequality, bias and these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical context.

Advertising texts contain certain ideology that advertisers used to convince the consumers in buying their products. Ideology is a form of ideas or beliefs peculiar to a particular social group, class or society. It is an implicit assumptions held largely in interaction with power relations (Fairclough, 1993: 20). Fairclough identifies three-dimensional framework for text analysis: 1) the linguistic description of the formal properties of the text; 2) the interpretation of the relationship between the discursive processes/interaction and the text; and 3) the explanation of the relationship between discourse, social and cultural reality.

3. Materials and Methods

The data for this study contain many euphemistic devices in the ads collected from internet (Facebook). The ads were selected in this study based on their relevance. Among the choice ads, the study gave preference to herbal medicines communications. The aim was to illustrate how ads of herbal medicines for curing weak manhood conceal information to inspire recipients to consumption.

The ad plates contain both pictures and texts. We present the text in the clauses with slashes "/" to show their scope. The procedure was based on Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) as a pointer to the limit of the simple clause. The transitivity system applied in Figure 1, which was later converted to Table 1, helped the study to account for the linguistic components of the clauses in relation to content meanings.

The frequency, as shown in Table 1, was later translated to Figure 2 in order to calculate and account for the position of each transitivity facility as appeared in (Figure 1). The sequence might help readers to easily appreciate the flow of the goings-on. With the help of denotative and connotative terminologies, the discussion revolves around the transitivity system. Tx in the table is an abbreviation of text.

Table 1. Recurrence of the transitivity components.

Transitivity	Value												Total
	Tx1	Tx2	Tx3	Tx4	Tx5	Tx6	Tx7	Tx8	Tx9	Tx10	Tx11	Tx12	
Material	1	5	5	1	1	5	0	2	3	5	2	1	26
Mental	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relational	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Relational	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Behavioral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Verbal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Circumstance	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	2	12

Source: Author, 2023.

3.1 Data presentation

Images 1 to 12 (internet posts), with endpoint slashes, indicate the clauses of the advertising plates 1-12, explored in Figure 1.

3.2 Data analysis

Figure 1 below represents the systemic analysis of the selected ads' texts. We translate the transitivity analysis in Figure 1 to a readable table and graph in Figure 2.

Text 1:

Bye bye	to 2-mins-knacks, to little gbola, to infection
Participant	Circ.: Loc. [place]

b.

Don't let	your gbola	scatter	your next match
Pr.: Material	Goal	Pr.: Material	Goal

c

Our product	na (is)	faya (fire)
Carrier	Pr.: Rel. Ident.	Attribute

Text 2:

Simplest way to satisfy your home	tonight	with strong, long, big and lastin gbola
Participant	Cir.: Loc. [Time]	Cir.: Manner

Text 3:

Become	the mahn of steel	in the inner rum
Pr.: Material	Goal	Cir.: Loc. [Place]

b.

Restore	your lost confidence	rock	solid	ride	better
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Pr.: Material	Goal	Pr.: Material	Goal	Pr.: Material	Goal
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c.

Geht	bigga and ticks gbola
Pr.: Material	Goal

d.

And	be	infection free
Conj.	Pr.: Rel. Ident.	Token

Text 4:

Finally	exposed
Cir.:	Pr.: Material

b.

How to make ur carrot big	in 14 days guaranteed
Participant	Cir.: Loc. [Place]

Text 5:

Wake up	with the strongest bamboo	every morning
Pr.: Material	Cir.: Manner	Cir.: Loc. [Time]

Text 6:

Manpower	stays	longer
Actor	Pr.: Material	Goal

b.

Take	it	30 mins before action
Pr.: Material	Goal	Cir.: Time

c.

Good for man
Participant

d.

Sustain	your relationship
Pr.: Material	Goal

e.

Save	your marriage
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Pr.: Material	Goal
---------------	------

f.

Stay	longer	as man
Pr.: Material	Goal	Circ.: Manner [Comparison]

Text 7:

With Bazuka max... 45 mins	is	sure
Carrier	Pr.: Rel. Ident.	Value

Text 8:

Conquer	the inner chamber
Pr.: Material	Goal

Text 9:

Become	oga boss
Pr.: Material	Goal

b.

And	make	sisi-madam	enjoys	better something
Conj.	Pr.: Material	Goal	Pr.: Material	Goal

Text 10:

Excellence in the other room	is not	by luck o
Actor	Pr.: Material	Circum.: Manner

b.

It	is	correct gbola	that	makes	the way forward
Actor	Pr.: Material	Goal		Pr.: Material	Goal

c.

So	acquire	the skill	now
	Pr.: Material	Goal	Circum.: Loc. [Time]

d.

The correct gbola	is	in your hand
Actor	Pr.: Material	Circum.: Loc. [Place]

Text 11:

If	you	don't leave	her legs shaking
	Actor	Pr.: Material	Goal

b.

Someone else	will [do]
Actor	Pr.: Material

Text 12:

Extra time, extra strength	for extra performance
Participant	Circum: Cause

b.

Extra time & extra large	are crafted	with action
Actor	Pr.: Material	Circum: Manner

Table 2. Grammatical (Transitivity) analysis of the ads.

Transitivity	Value
Material	26
Mental	0
Relational	2
Behavioral	0
Verbal	0
Existential	0
Circumstance	12

Source: Author, 2023.

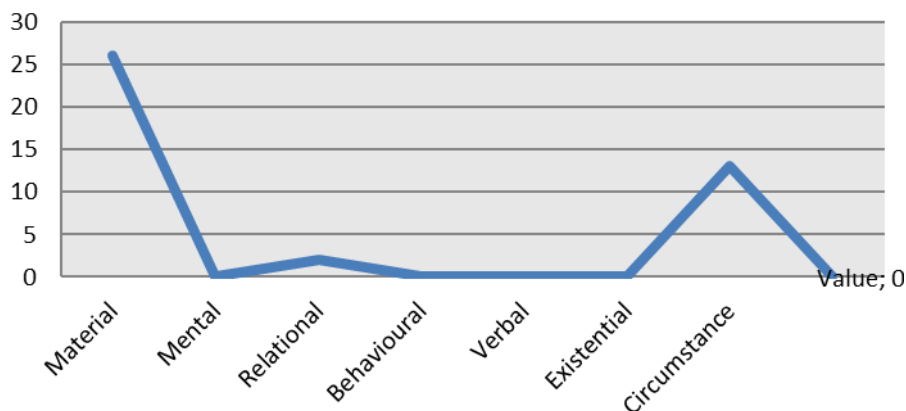


Figure 2. Graphical illustration of the ads' transitivity components. Source: Author, 2023.

3. Results

The graph in Figure 2 above reveals that the advertisers target audience through the deployment of the Material processes which propel the readers to act in accordance with the text. This therefore reflects the preponderance of 'happening' and 'doing' of information disseminated to the target audience. However, the circumstances, indicating location and means, serve as communicative devices enhancing the messages of the goings-on.

4. Discussion

The transitivity analysis in images 1-12 reveals the semiotic slots which take care of denotative meaning and discursively, we use as a medium of denotative and connotative concerns of the images. We use the discussion medium as a channel of investigating discursively both denotative and connotative components of the images. The perspective therefore aided us in the semantic discourses of the texts, following the descriptions of euphemistic devices of the advertising frames after Barthes (1967), Allan and Burridge (1991), Cruse (2004), and Dominguez (2005).

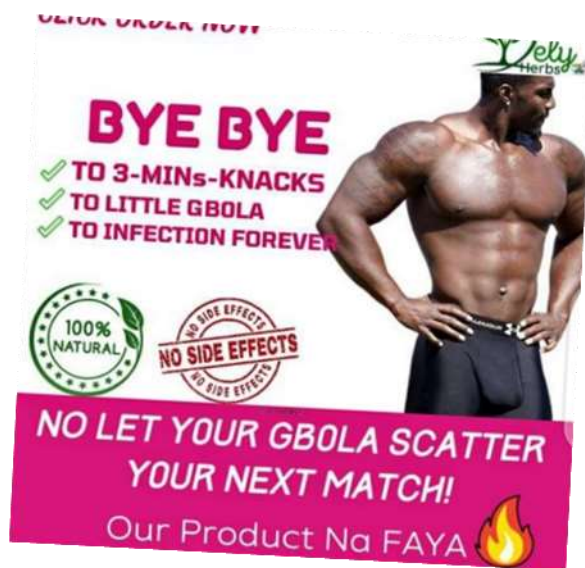


Image 1. //Bye bye to 3 mins knacks, to little gbola, to infection// don't let your gbola scatter your next match//our product na (is) faya (fire)//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

In image 1, the clauses 'bye bye to 3 mins knacks, to little gbola, to infection', 'don't let your gbola scatter your next match', and 'our product na (is) faya (fire)', from the point of view of the transitivity systems, are declarative and imperative respectively. The Material Process of 'don't let' and 'scatter' employ 'your gbola' and 'your next

match' as Goal. The words 'gbola' and 'knack' have their origin from Nigeria Pidgin English (thereafter, NPE), which means man's penis and act of sex respectively. Knack in Standard English means an acquired or natural skill at doing something. Clause C of image 1 is declarative, and it features Relational Process of 'is' and 'faya' (fire) as Token. The goings-on, 'Don't let' and 'is' serve as markers of the verbal group, which indicate the composition of the internal content of the product.

The function of the product is euphemistically projected, first, the lexemes 'gbola', 'next match' and 'fire' construct a sort of hypocritical idea for readers because they are concealment of cure for weak manhood. Here, 'gbola' is a metaphor of manhood; 'next match' refers to sexual intercourse between two lovers (a man and a woman); and 'fire' represents man's activeness in using his manhood during sexual intercourse. The imagery clearly demonstrates that claim with the appearance of a hefty man in the picture.

The Process 'Don't let your gbola scatter your next match' and 'our product is fire', create a probable misunderstanding for readers, here; the advertisers did not mention the participant that will scatter the match. The readers can infer from the picture of a hefty man to be the participant. Then, what kind of match are we talking about? Again, the readers could also be confused with the choice of fire in the ad. It's an open statement inviting logical reasoning. Then, a question could emanate thus: 'Is it the product that is firing or the producer of the product? Lack of clarification leaves a recipient to his/her logical reasoning, as earlier mentioned.

The Goals, 'your next match' and 'fire', are manipulative. One could suggest that a footballer could be instructed to play well in his next match. But going by the word 'gbola', which means 'penis' in NPE, the readers will understand that the product makes man strong in performing his sexual role as a man. The images of a man, fire and emblems of approval designed on the product are a proof of that argument. The design features connote a degree of perfection and excellence.

The images used by the advertiser are appropriately selected to tell the target audience the resultant effects of using the product. The images also show how experts use such images (objects) to soothe consumer's feelings in order to lure them to consumption (Boorstin, 1963). The advertiser skillfully replaces penis with 'gbola' in order to show impoliteness. He therefore accompanies the text with appropriate images that will aid readers' interpretation. Nevertheless, 'foul language' which dysphemizes the product might cause consumers hidden information.



Image 2. //Simplest way to satisfy your home tonight with strong, big and lasting gbola//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

'Simplest way to satisfy your home tonight with strong, big and lasting gbola' is a complex noun phrase of a high degree. The assignment of participants to the linguistic organs attests to that because there's no process to indicate their kinds. Going by the structure of Image 2 above, we can say that the product's name which serves as the subject of the text is omitted and it therefore renders the sentence without a process. Image 2 indirectly declares to consumers that wish to satisfy their wives in the night to use the product in order for them to increase the size of their manhood for intensive sexual intercourse. The text and the image of a woman butt are creatively used by the advertiser to get the verbal creativity right in order for the public to consume the product (Ogilvy, 2013).



Image 3. //Become the mahn (man) of steel in the inner rum//restore it lost confidence//rock solid//ride better//get bigga and ticka gboola and be infection free//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Command is the structure of Image 3, clauses A-C, as analyzed in Image 2. In Image 3, clause 1, the imperative 'Become the mahn (man) of steel in the inner rum', has 'become', 'ride', 'get' as the Material Processes accompanied with the Goal, 'the man of steel.' The clause commands readers to use the product. Yet, 'become' is a connotative tool of conviction in the perception that the readers are asked to revitalize their sexual strengths through *Aloe vera*. It therefore shows that the herbal medicine is an energizer, whose consumption can reinvigorate manhood. The advertiser creatively uses two phrases 'Man of steel' and 'Inner rum' as metaphors for resultant effect of the herbal product on manhood.

Again, 'Man of steel' is a metaphor for a man with strong/active manhood and 'inner rum' is a metaphor for female reproductive organ. These expressions are instances of euphemism which the advertiser used politely to convince the target audience. As such, there is a transfer of meaning from one domain to another (Enright, 1985; Dominguez, 2015) as a way to please the target audience. Going by the structure of the clauses in Figure 3, one could wonder what Goals the clauses are talking about. Here, the accompaniment of images - that's, the picture of a man with a smiling face and the images of the product help the readers to know what the ad is talking about. Therefore, euphemism is used to make the target audience friendly in order to easily, cleverly purchase the product. The man with a smiling face is used euphemistically to tell men with weak manhood to fear no more because if they patronize the product their weak manhood will become stronger and active.



Image 4. //finally exposed//How to make ur (your) carrot big in 14 days guaranteed//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

In Image 4, both the images and text have euphemistic contents. Figure 4 clause has the structure 'finally exposed//How to make ur (your) carrot big in 14 days guaranteed//'. We can say that the advertiser of this product is concerned with the action of the product. Here, inversion is used to let the consumers know the advertiser's emphasis. The clause can be restructured thus: 'How to make ur (your) carrot big in 14 days guaranteed finally exposed'. The clause has a Material Process 'exposed', which makes the communication polite by the use of 'carrot.' 'Carrot' as used in the clause means 'penis'. It will be a taboo for the advertiser to use 'small penis' in the context of the ad. 'Carrot' is therefore euphemized to inspire recipients, most of which are men. In order for the advertising professionals to achieve communication creativity, they use cyber spelling 'ur' for the possessive pronoun 'your' because of conciseness.

The picture of a beautiful lady with a smiling face is a persuasive strategy for luring men with weak manhood to buy the herbal medicine product. The advertising professionals create a sense for men as demonstrated by the picture of the lady. The use of 'carrot' along with the picture connotes the consumers of the product. Here, the lady's picture is used euphemistically to save the face of men with weak manhood. The advertiser of the product therefore specifies the message in order to present men in a good light for general acceptability in the competitive herbal medicine market.



Image 5. //Wake up with the strongest bamboo//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Image 5 demonstrates 'wake up' as Material Process, while 'with the strongest bamboo' is circumstantial element of manner. The clause in its entirety is an imperative, which demands goods-and-services from readers. 'With the strongest bamboo' is an indicator of manner and also as additional information to the persuasive message. The substitution begins with the process 'Wake up' as a reference to activeness of manhood in readiness for sexual intercourse. 'Wake up' replaces active sex as a transfer of meaning in order to please the target audience.

The advertiser euphemizes the action of active sex with 'wake up' and the choice of 'bamboo' (e.i, penis). The deployment of leaves in the ad serves as a means of telling the target audience the ingredients that make up the herbal product. The images of leaves are a proof of the argument. Although one may wonder why the text makes reference to a bamboo and the image featuring flowers, it is obvious that the images of flower fail to match both the internal and external features of the product that they depict. Hence, the advertisers use such a fascinating object to soothe consumer's feelings or order to lure them to consumption (Boorstin, 1963).



Image 6. //Manpower stays longer//good for man//take it 30 mins before action/sustain your marriage relationship//save your marriage// and stay longer as man//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

There are six clauses in Image 6. Clauses A and C are declarative, while clauses B, D, E and F are imperative. These are 'Manpower stays longer', 'good for man' and for the imperative, 'take it 30 mins before action', 'sustain your marriage relationship', 'save your marriage' and 'stay longer as man.' As the verb 'stays', is a Material Process and the elliptic process in 'good for man' can read thus: 'It is good for man'. 'Is' is a Relational Process, identifying the personality of a consumer as a good human being. The two declarative clauses have their participating entities as Goals, longer and good respectively.

The euphemism in these two declarative clauses is that the advertiser uses the product's name (i. e, Manpower) as something that stays longer'. This shows that when a man with a weak manhood uses the herbal product, he will be able to last longer during sexual intercourse. The elliptic clause 'good for man supports what the advertiser has in mind for the target audience.

In addition, the two declarative clauses used by the advertiser help to provide the target audience information about the product. It is assumed by the advertiser that having given the target audience information about the product, it is therefore necessary to command them to patronize the product. The accompanying imperative clauses as mentioned above have the following Material Processes: 'take', 'sustain', 'save', and 'stay' respectively. The participating entities as Goals are 'it', 'your relationship', 'your marriage', and 'longer.' 'It', as used in the clause above, represents 'Manpower.

'The choice of imperative clauses in the ad collocates with the choice of the processes. We can say that the choice of 'stay', 'sustain', 'take' and 'stay' have connotation concealment. It therefore connotes that one's marriage/relationship can last or be sustained if the man in charge is able to perform well with his female lover/wife. The image of two lovers/couple with smiling faces, and with a bottle of *Kondo Bitter* is a referent to the argument. The image presents the lovers handsomely and beautifully, and it appears for readers to envy. Another facility contributing to the euphemism is the bottle of *Kondo Bitter*. The product's image attached to the lovers' image connotes attraction. The intention of the advertiser is to reveal to either a man or a woman that sees the product to buy the product.

Again, the circumstantial element of time in "Take it 30 mins before action" signals accompaniment as well as cause. The advertiser, therefore, calls on man with weak manhood to take the herbal product 30 min to sexual intercourse. This command by the advertiser is a way or means of staying longer and sustaining one's marriage or relationship.



Image 7. //With Bazuka Max...45 min is sure//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Image 7, 'With Bazuka Max...45 mins is sure', contains one component of the transitivity, that is, 'is' as the Relational Process and 'With Bazuka Mix', a circumstantial element of manner, signaling accompaniment as well as cause. 'Is' conceals connotative meanings such as the beginning. The Relational Process identifies the activeness of the product and the time span it works for. To present the potency of *Bazuka Max*, the advertiser foregrounds the product's name as the actor of the clause, whereas it is a circumstantial element of the clause which reads thus: '45 mins is sure with *Bazuka Max*?' We can say that the advertiser emphasizes the product's name just to tell the target audience the product's work.

Moreover, Image 7 is declarative. It is a statement that provides consumers basic information about *Bazuka Max*. Going by the structure of the clause, a question that comes to readers' minds is 'What is sure?' Hence, the manipulative strategy used by the advertiser is just to emphasize what is sure at the beginning of the sentence. It is therefore clear to the readers that what is sure is '45 min effects the product will have on the consumers. In addition, the accompaniment of the text with the image of two lovers/couple and the product also connotes that when the target audience use the product, there is assurance for them to smile. Hence, it connotes that the source of joy in sexual intercourse comes from the ability of a man to satisfy his female lovers. The smiling faces of the couple or lovers attest to this.



Image 8. //Conquer the inner chamber//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Command is the structure of image 8 as analyzed in Figure 8. The imperative clause, 'Conquer the inner chamber,' has 'conquer' as the Material Process accompanied with the Goal, 'Inner chamber.' The clause commands readers to patronize Erect Up. Yet, 'conquer' is a connotative tool of conviction in the sense that readers are asked to win their sexual strength through Erect Up. This means that herbal medicine is an energizer, whose consumption can reinvigorate consumers' manhood to win sexual intercourse.

The Goal 'Inner chamber' is metaphorical. It is a concept that refers to the female reproductive organ. Here, there is a transfer of meaning from one domain to another (Enright, 1985; Dominguez, 2015) as a means of pleasing the target audience. One may wonder what the clause is commanding readers to conquer while referring to 'Inner chamber.' This is an ambiguous linguistic expression. As 'Inner chamber' points to the female reproductive organ in a connotative form.

The replacement seems to create confusion because only educated readers could decode the information in its appropriateness. The image accompanying the text can help readers to deduce the meaning embedded in the clause. The image of the product with the product's name (Erect Up) is a text that helps readers understand the ad. It is now obvious that what the clause instructs its readers to conquer is a strong/active erection for a man with weak manhood. Here, once the readers see the product's picture, it stays longer in their memory than the verbal texts (Bendito, 2005). The use of euphemism in this ad is to be friendly with the readers in order to lure them into buying the product.



Image 9. //Become *OgaBoss* and make *Sisi-Madam* enjoy better something//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

'Become *Oga Boss* and make *Sisi-Madam* enjoy better something' of image 9 are punctuated and hidden. The clause in Image 9 above is imperative. The intention of this clause is to order both men and women the enjoyment they can find in using the product. 'Become *Oga Boss*' instructs a woman to hold on to her man; 'make *Sisi-madam* enjoys better something' calls on man to exercise his virility with his woman.

The conjunction 'and' functions as a paratactic linker (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). However, the Material Processes 'become', 'make' and 'enjoy' call the readers to action and the Goals '*Oga Boss*', '*Sisi-Madam*' and 'better something' are used here to show the recipients of the action. '*Oga Boss*' is an expression taken from NPE, which means that when a man uses the product he will surely become boss when engaging in sexual intercourse; whereas '*Sisi-madam*', an NPE expression refers to a woman who enjoys sex most from her man.

The expression, 'something better' written as 'better something' is euphemistically used to avoid impoliteness. The advertiser would have used 'better sex' in place of 'better something', but he does so just to appeal to the target audience in order to convince them.

Furthermore, the advertiser argument is supported with the image of a man with smiling face and the product's seal. The images are intentionally used to please and inspire the audience. The images connote the assurance of using the herbal product. Hence, euphemizing 'better something' with 'better sex' is a means of concealment but

deceitful to readers (Crystal, 1998). The substitution of 'better something' with 'better sex' is the motive for XS Fire to seduce the public with polite language and appropriate images through substitution, concealment and connotation.



Image 10. //Excellence in the other room is not by luck oh//It is correct gbola that makes the way forward// and the correct gbola is in your hand//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Image 10 contains four clauses, out of which three are declaratives and the other one imperative. The declarative clauses are 'Excellence in the other room is not by luck oh', 'It is correct gbola' that makes the way forward and 'the correct gbola is in your hand.' The processes in the three clauses is Relational, identifying the personality of a consumer as dignified human being.

Clause B has its participating entry as Goal, 'correct gbola' and 'the way forward', while clauses B and D are circumstantial elements of manner and location respectively. Clauses A & D are declaratives giving out information about the herbal product. 'By luck oh' and 'in your hand' are indicators of manner and location, and as additional information to the persuasive message. The participating entities in clauses A & D provide information on how excellence in the other room can be achieved.

'Other room' in the context of this ad means female reproductive organ (vagina). Reading this ad by the readers will generate a question thus: What kind of excellence are we talking about or which other room do we expect? The choice of 'other room' in the ad is manipulative; this is chosen to tease the target audience. Clause B clears the doubt in clause A by telling the readers that the 'correct gbola (penis)' is the one that can make progress/way forward in the female reproductive organ. The 'other room' as used in the ad is also a place for sexual intercourse. The clause also emphasizes how this excellence can be achieved by correct gbola (penis).

Having provided the necessary information in clauses A, B and C, the advertiser in clause C orders the readers to acquire the skill of correct gbola (penis). Here, the Material Process 'acquire' is used to command readers to move ahead to get the product. The Goal in clause C, that is, 'the skill' also supports what is needed of the readers before they could achieve excellence in the race of sexual intercourse.

Additional connotative comparison is the images of a handsome man holding the product. Another facility contributing to the euphemism is the image of a man that holds a spark plug in his left hand. The spark plug connotes attraction, which shows the strength of Pawaful M. K Oil. Out of the two images - a young man holding a spark plug and the one holding the herbal product, the concern of the advertising practitioners is nothing more than 'correct gbola (penis).' The plug is a metaphor of man virility. It is obvious that the work of a spark plug in a combustive engine is to ignite.

It therefore connotes that whenever a man uses the product he will be fully charged to enjoy maximum sexual intercourse. Again, the text 'the correct GB is in your hand' accompanied the image. This strategy is used to assure the target audience that getting hold of the product; one will surely take control of one's manhood during

sexual intercourse. 'GB' in the ad is a shortened form of 'gbola', that is, penis. The choice of GB may be ambiguous to readers. While some may interpret it as gigabyte, other may see it as something else. The readers are therefore left behind to read in between the lines for its full meaning.



Image 11. //If you don't leave her legs shaking, someone else will//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

The systemic analysis of image 11 (clause C) demonstrates 'don't leave' as Material Process, while 'her legs shaking' and 'you' are Goal and Actor respectively. Image 11 (clause B) is declarative. The ad is a conditional statement that calls on men with weak manhood to take remedy before their female lovers are taken away by another man. It also supplies consumers information about *Bazuka Pack*. The Actor, 'you' is interpreted as somebody with weak manhood.

The Goal 'her legs shaking' is confusing because one may be thinking of the woman whose legs are being shaken. Here, 'her legs shaking' is a manifestation of politeness to represent the quality of *Bazuka Pack* when it comes to sexual intercourse. It is also assured in this ad that if a man does not give his woman/female lovers satisfactory sexual intercourse, she will be taken away by men with active manhood. This argument is supported by clause B (Image 11), which has declarative structure, and the Actor and Process as 'someone else's and 'will [do]' ' respectively. The use of indefinite pronoun, 'someone', is manipulatively used to lure consumers.

Additional connotative comparison is the images of the *Bazuka Pack* product and the legs. The bottle of *Bazuka Pack* is not only bold; and it is also pronounced as well as higher than the legs. Contributing to euphemism is the legs that bear the text 'If you don't leave her legs shaking, someone else will [do]!' The legs are metaphor for concubines that are ready to take over the role of a legitimate husband that is supposed to satisfy his wife. The pictures of the legs and the text are boldly embossed to reveal to readers the solution the herbal product can solve.



Image 12. //extra time/extra strength for extra performance/extra time and extra large are crafted with active ingredients to give you the power to do more and more extra time to use//. Source: Facebook, 2023.

Image 12 presents three clauses of which 'extra time and extra large are crafted with active' is declarative. The other two, 'extra times and 'extra strength for extra performance' are fragmented facilities. The transitivity communicates 'are crafted as a Material Process, reflecting men's skill in staying long during sexual intercourse. In other words, 'are crafted' is an appealing lexeme that shows the skill of engaging in long sexual intercourse.

It is from this point that the connotative nature of 'are crafted' commences. Although concealed in meaning, the action process infers a sense of taking herbal product with immediate action on its users. This action is reflected in the image of a hefty man with sweat all over his body. The Actor in clause C 'extra time/ extra large' is euphemized to tell the readers that the more they take the herbal product, the more the size of their manhood increases; thereby allowing them to take extra time during sexual intercourse.

The circumstantial element 'with active ingredients to give you the power to do more and more extra time to use' supplies information about the components of the product with assurance that guarantees its potency. The circumstantial element of clause C does not mention any word relating to manhood except that the image of the hefty man is positioned vertically on the frame. Both the image and the ad in image 12 have euphemistic contents. The text 'extra time and extra large are crafted with active... ', has the circumstantial element. It is obvious that the linguistic structure is deleted to achieve persuasion (Hoey, 2000; Carter; Nash, 2013).

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the selected herbal cure for weak manhood as presented here reveals that euphemism is a common phenomenon in the language used to advertise herbal medicines and a powerful persuasive tool in advertising discourse. There are preponderance of polite texts and images in the choice communications investigated.

We find those qualities in the form of metaphors, substitutions, connotations, and images. The examination of selected herbal ads reveals that not only are vulgar words (for example, small penis) avoided in advertising discourse, as can naturally be expected. Socially acceptable substitutions like 'cannot stay long', 'can't last long', etc. are also avoided. However acceptable they may be in certain context; they are considered too explicit, pinged with negative connotation and therefore create war among readers.

Based on our analysis, the study reveals substitution, metaphors, and euphemism as concealed in the distinct behavior of presenting weak manhood as 'gbola', 'fire', 'next match' in image 1, 'strong, big and stronger gbola' in Image 3, 'bigga and ticka gbola' in Image 3; 'big carrot' in Image 4; 'strongest bamboo' in Image 5; 'stay long as man' in Image 6; '45 min' in Image 7, 'inner chamber' in Image 8, 'better something' in Image 9; 'correct gbola' in Image 10; 'leg shaking' in Image 11; and 'extra time' and 'extra large' in Image 12.

The study also reveals concealments in form of sexual satisfaction (next match, lasting gbola, bigga gbola, better something, leg shaking) and power/activeness (big carrot, strongest bamboo, Manpower, 45 min, inner chamber, excellence in the other room, ... power to do more, and extra time/large).

It goes without saying that the present study, limited to herbal cure products for men in Nigeria ads, doesn't claim to be exhaustive. Further research is needed on the role of euphemism in a larger collection of ads, as provided by corpus linguistics, which could allow valid conclusions from a quantitative point of view to be revealed.

In addition, it would be interesting to know whether the results obtained in the present study regarding ads on Nigeria cure for weak manhood differ from other countries. We therefore recommend further researches to analyze from a multimodal perspective on how different visual and linguistic choices deployed in the herbal cure for weak manhood ads contribute to the euphemistic and persuasive import of taboo-related advertising.

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6. Authors' Contributions

Festus Moses Onipede: project, outline of ideas, reading, writing the article, corrections, submission and publication.

7. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest.

8. Ethics Approval

Not applicable.

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