

## **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to critically analyze the languages of billboard advertisements of three banks in Zimbabwe which they use when communicating with their diverse clientele in order to gain competitive advantage. These banks are Standard Chartered (Stanchart), Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ) and National Merchant bank (NMB). These banks have specifically been selected because they offer contradictory approaches which mirror struggles of gender, race, class and the spectacle masculinity and they also have different ownership patterns. Stanchart is internationally owned, CBZ is State owned and National Merchant Bank is owned by Independent/Indigenous entrepreneurs. The central argument in this article is that although advertisers are better placed to control the production of meaning, communication between banks and the potential customers is a product of negotiation of meaning at the point of reception of the printed advertisements. This article is also mindful of the fact that audiences have the potential to contradict identities created by the producers of advertisers. The article recommends that advertisements should avoid the use of words and images (languages) that downplay the cultural importance of women, children and old people.