

Shaping the Education System, One Ad at a Time:

A Singapore Study

by

Cynthia Ong

Student ID Number: 1307924

A dissertation submitted to the
College of Arts and Law
of the University of Birmingham
in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Applied Linguistics

This dissertation consists of approximately 14,846 words

Supervisor: Dr Suganthi John

ELAL,

College of Arts & Law

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT

United Kingdom

September 2015

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the qualitative examination of teacher recruitment commercials over fifteen years to reveal the evolution of education objectives and teacher requirements of the Singapore education system. The commercials analysed comprise ten advertisements that convey messages predominantly via visual or linguistic resources and were selected based on their availability at time of research. Kress and van Leeuwen's framework to multimodal analysis was employed in examining these commercials.

Semiotic resources in the commercials were examined to reveal meanings conveyed, from which teacher roles, student types and education outcome expectations were identified. These were discussed together with observed representations of ethnicity, gender and power, surfacing the changing teacher requirements and education objectives of Singapore education. The analysis revealed the education system's progressive objectives, from imparting content and knowledge to character development and instilling of aspirational notions, equipping students with right values, solid knowledge and future-ready skills, remodelling teachers into skillful educators and ultimately inspiring mentors. The paper concludes with a calling to extend the analysis scope under social semiotics and to further examine changing student profiles, which shall surely illuminate future paths of Singapore education.

Keywords: advertising, education objectives, multimodal communication, Singapore education system, sociolinguistics, teacher requirements, teaching

DEDICATION

To my husband, Then Fui Kong

For your encouragement, support and understanding throughout my scholarly journey,
and your belief in the importance of education, and in me.

And to the founding Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew

For his relentless insistence on quality education that I may relentlessly pursue this,
my passion for words and language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To family and friends who have rendered me encouragement throughout the course of my programme, my heartfelt thanks. To my dissertation supervisor, Dr Suganthi John, and my course tutor, Dr Stephen Pihlaja, my sincere gratitude for your invaluable guidance. Last but not least, to the academic and administrative staff at the University of Birmingham that I have had the opportunities to make contact with, particularly Dr Crayton Walker, Mr Daniel Malt and Ms Michelle Cullen, for your assistance and academic support, my utmost appreciation.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Education in Singapore	1
1.2	Dissertation Objectives	2
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1	The Social Semiotic Framework	4
2.2	Application of the Social Semiotic Framework	5
2.2.1	The Interpersonal Metafunction	5
2.2.2	The Ideational Metafunction	7
2.2.3	The Textual Metafunction	10
CHAPTER 3	ANALYSIS PROCEDURE	12
CHAPTER 4	EVOLUTION OF THE SINGAPORE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE	15
4.1	1999 “Education”	15
4.2	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	21
4.3	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	23
4.4	2009 “Teacher”	27
4.5	2011-2013 “Case Studies”	31
4.5.1	2011 “Mrs Chong”	31
4.5.2	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	38
4.5.3	2013 “Mr Kumar”	40
4.6	Changing Trends in the Singapore Education System	48

CHAPTER 5	ISSUES AND INTERPRETATIONS	56
5.1	The ‘Exclusion’ Offer	56
5.2	Interpretations and Alternatives	57
5.3	Sociocultural Factors	59
CHAPTER 6	CONCLUSION	61
REFERENCES		62
APPENDICES		68
APPENDIX 1	SUMMARY OF ANALYSES	68
APPENDIX 2	STUDENT AND TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS	73

MEDIA RESOURCES

LIST OF COMMERCIALS ENCLOSED

1999 Education – Chemistry

1999 Education – Geography

1999 Education – Mathematics

2002 If You Teach Me How

2006 Making Lessons Come Alive

2009 Teacher 1

2009 Teacher 2

2011 Mrs Chong

2011 Mrs Cordeiro

2013 Mr Kumar

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

It is undeniable that education is the foundation of society. Particularly for a nation with limited land area for development and lacking in natural resources as Singapore, people are the most valuable – albeit only – asset. As such, a quality education system for people excellence has always been a top priority for the country’s leaders since nation-building.

Singapore’s education system has evolved in tandem with the nation’s development and transformation, creating and refining her workforce to constantly meet the ever-changing needs and requirements of modern society. The nation-building objective of a “united and coherent people” (Lee 1959:2) iterated during the 1959 Teachers Rally necessitated the fulfillment of education objectives of bilingualism and knowledge equality through curriculum standardization, calling for teachers to be exemplary models of altruism, forbearance and enthusiasm (ibid.). These formed the foundation upon which Singapore’s education system has developed, with the enduring focus on imparting skillsets relevant to current industrial and commercial needs, inculcating values such as diligence and selflessness and in recent years, developing in students ‘21st century’ soft skills and inspiring them towards personal excellence (Ng 2008). These changing objectives of education to fulfill societal needs result in the evolution of the role of teachers, and are the areas of interest in this paper.

1.2 DISSERTATION OBJECTIVES

This study examines the shifts in education objectives and teacher requirements of the Singapore education system in recent years through the following research questions:

- 1) What were the semiotic resources employed to convey meanings in Singapore teacher recruitment television commercials from 1999 to present?
- 2) How has the portrayal of (i) teacher roles, (ii) student types, and (iii) education outcome expectations changed in these commercials?
- 3) What are some wider implications of this analysis for the portrayal of the Singapore education system's education objectives and teacher requirements over this time period?

Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework for multimodal analysis interprets signs as motivated resources with semiotic potential for communicating meaning (van Leeuwen 2005), rendering it well-suited for employment to analyse these commercials that purposefully combine various semiotic resources in both temporal and spatial composition to communicate specific messages to viewers (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Additionally, ethnicity, gender and power representations will be highlighted and discussed, the former two revealing the extent to which social equality is embodied in the education system while the latter provides further insight into changing dynamics of the teacher-student relation. It is thus hoped that these analyses will reveal the Singapore education system's shifts in pedagogic stances as well as its contribution towards societal equality, hence enhancing unity amidst diversity, for a cohesive people and competent nation.

The next chapter presents Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework and its application to visual analysis while Chapter 3 outlines the procedure to analysing the commercials. The analysis will be detailed in Chapter 4 after which Chapter 5 discusses issues surfaced and alternative interpretations before the paper concludes with suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE SOCIAL SEMIOTIC FRAMEWORK

Social semiotics is the study of the use of semiotic resources in purposeful communication to convey meanings within social interactions and contexts (Kress 2010). It was developed from three schools of semiotics; while the earlier Prague and Paris schools adopted linguistic concepts as foregrounding and Saussure's *langue* and *parole* respectively in analysing non-linguistic communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), current social semiotic frameworks of multimodal analysis emphasizes the examination of modes or motivated resources with semiotic potential, and are founded on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics framework proposing the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions behind language use (Halliday, Matthiessen and Matthiessen 2014).

While linguistic modes such as written and spoken texts have been iterated as meaning-making semiotic resources (*ibid.*), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) extended the category to include visual modes as photographs and videos, drawing on their similar potential in realizing speech acts of offers and demands of information or goods and services, which together with bodily gestures, typography and music form a comprehensive set of semiotic resources for communicative purposes. These are typically integrated in spatial composition such as paintings or temporal composition such as dance, where elements are simultaneously present or unfold with time respectively to convey functional meanings, which will be detailed in the next section.

2.2 APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL SEMIOTIC FRAMEWORK

The following sub-sections discuss the application of Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework in multimodal analysis by examining the use of semiotic resources in fulfilling interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunctions.

2.2.1 THE INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTION

The interpersonal metafunction is the ability to project social relations between producers, viewers and represented entities (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Similar to linguistic declarative, imperative and interrogative speech acts conveying interpersonal meanings via variation in mood grammar and appraisal (Butt et al. 2000), visual, bodily and typographical resources fulfill aspects of this metafunction.

Visual and bodily resources of frame size, horizontal angle, gaze and gesture express engagement or otherwise. The adaptation of Hall's (1966) proxemic zone categories by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) iterates an inverse correlation between frame size thus social distance and intimacy, with further distances being more impersonal (Finnegan 2002). Illustrated in Lebaron and Streeck's (1997) study on spatial maneuvering during interrogation, participants utilized various social distances to engage in communication of varying intensity, thus achieving interactional goals. Frontal angle and direct gaze creating demand images increase engagement (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006); Finnegan (2002) details the use of gaze and non-gaze to secure and reject social interaction respectively, the former reinforced by frontal angles and the latter by oblique ones. Deictic gestures that indicate both concrete and

abstract entities may be employed to increase involvement via gesticulation towards participants, thus generating more intimate interactions (Martinec 2001). Vertical angle signals power, with the entity viewed from a lower angle accorded higher status (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). This is reinforced by Schubert's (2005) findings that power relations is associated with a vertical schema; not only are the powerful perceived to be at the top, but that which is elevated is conferred power.

Muscle tension and body angle signal modalities of tentativeness and willingness respectively while facial expression communicates emotional affect (Martinec 2001), exemplified in Feng and O'Halloran's (2012) study on semiotic resources as paradigmatic systems, in which facial actions were observed to efficiently convey emotions while touch and body orientation expressed affect activation, valence and intensity. More significantly, the study affirms the efficiency of social semiotics in analysing representation of emotive meanings in visual art, substantiating its application to this current study.

Modality is also communicated through visual elements of colour such as saturation, differentiation, modulation and 'faithfulness', contextualization of setting, specific or generic pictorial representation, depth and light, conveying varying degrees of naturalism or abstractness (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) explicated the complex meaning potential of colour in their discussion of the character homes express with their colour schemes, of identity, personal characteristics, values and interests of home owners, through provenance and distinctive visual elements such as light and hue, whose qualities vary along clines and altogether convey a plethora of realistic or abstract meanings to realize 'colour

acts', analogous to speech acts of linguistic discourse. Exploring a multimodal approach to teaching and learning, Jewitt et al. (2001) contextualised the classroom as a science laboratory through equipment setup and use of scientific terminology and procedures, creating an authentic environment for a Science lesson, and explicated pictorial abstraction in requiring students to produce scientific drawings, highlighting cell patterns for efficient learning rather than faithfully representing reality.

Typographical semiotic resources of weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation and serifs convey disposition (van Leeuwen 2006), reiterated in Nørgaard's (2009) research that built on van Leeuwen's approach to typography and adopted index, icon and discursive import as analysis categories. Indexical analyses of reproductions of typically "sloping, rounded and connected" handwriting (ibid.:149) contrasting with the rest of the printed text and its gradual disintegration in one excerpt revealed these samples' functions to purposefully authenticate and personalise the writers of such handwritten texts to readers and to signal instability via haphazard orientation respectively.

2.2.2 THE IDEATIONAL METAFUNCTION

The ideational metafunction refers to the "ability of semiotic systems to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system or in the semiotic systems of a culture" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:47). While realized linguistically through lexicon, grammar of transitivity and processes, experiential meanings are also conveyed via visual, bodily, typographical and musical semiotic resources in narrative and conceptual representations.

Narrative representation describes the world in terms of action (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), achieved via visual elements as follows. Material and inferred vectors and speech represent action, reaction and mental processes respectively. Participant combinations such as conjoining, compounding and fusion convey distinctiveness while contextualization reveals locative circumstance. Geometric symbolism depicts vectors-only processes and bodily gestures identify entities and present actions.

Conceptual representation communicates existential states and static properties, and is effected via symmetry, visual equality and carrier attributes (ibid.). Symmetry and visual equality exhibit classificational covert and overt processes representing superordinate and subordinate relations, not unlike intensive attributive clauses under functional grammar that relate carriers to attributes. Carrier-possessive attributes represent analytical processes relating participants as parts of wholes, analogous to possessive attributive clauses, and may be unstructured or structured via absence or presence of the Carrier respectively. Carrier-symbolic attributes signalling symbolic processes may be attributive or suggestive, conveying meaning via salience, gesture and connotation. Conceptual meanings are also expressed via bodily gestures that represent actions, such as iconic and metaphoric body movement as well as quotable gestures (McNeill 2005).

O'Halloran's (2008) application of the systemic functional approach to the analysis of ideational meanings in a print advertisement revealed the effective employment of such semiotic resources as above to convey the warning message of the threat of AIDS. The compounded image of a woman's hand on a man's naked torso signalled

connectedness, and together with his grasping of his belt buckle contextualized the setting of a sexual encounter. The salient curvature and state of undress of the torso symbolized men's vulnerability to female sexual predators, suggesting such classification of the genders within this context. The typographical choice for the main heading 'AIDS' generated a sense of obscurity for the disease via its outline style font, while its size lent salience. The latter was similarly effected in Nørgaard's (2009) examples of majuscules expressing sonic salience and italics, the 'irregular' items within texts of regular font, emphasizing word meaning. These exemplify typography's contribution to conceptual meanings, observed in O'Halloran (2008) to be conveyed additionally via straight disconnected compressed font for 'AIDS' signalling masculinity and stress.

Musical resources of timing, sound quality and sign typology also perform conceptual representation. Unmeasured timing creates a sense of grandeur and sacredness while measured timing represents regularity as that of "everyday life and work" (van Leeuwen 1999:51), signalling conformity, impersonality, unison and excitement, or otherwise. Sound quality is achieved via musical arrangement and rhythm, contributing to emotional affect such as tension, intimacy and power (Machin 2010). Tagg's (1999b) sign typology comprises anaphones referencing non-musical sounds, episodic markers functioning as event signals and style indicators and genre synecdoches respectively referencing 'home' and 'foreign' musical styles that express culturally established meanings. Supporting such analyses of musical resources to reveal meanings, Scherer and Oshinsky (1977) cited in Scherer (1995) examined acoustic parameters such as tempo, amplitude variation and pitch, which were observed to influence aspects of listener emotions with varying strengths. Similar to

Tagg's sign typology, Feld (1984) proposed the analysis of music via 'interpretive moves' that juxtapose musical structures and entities against contextual knowledge, reinforcing the usefulness of such information in making musical meaning.

2.2.3 THE TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION

The textual metafunction focuses on the formation and organization of texts (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Linguistically achieved via thematic structure and cohesion elements such as ellipsis, textual coherence and cohesion may also be effected via visual, bodily and typographical resources.

Textual cohesion is achieved via the visual resources of colour similarity, bodily gesture coordination and typeface regularity while textual coherence is observable via information value, salience and framing (ibid.), with information value conveyed via positioning of visuals as well as beat and turn-taking bodily gestures that also express salience. The latter is also communicated via visual factors of size, focus, contrast, placement, perspective and figure-ground distinction, as well as typographical elements while segregation is achieved via framing. Exemplified in O'Halloran (2008), the employment of the same font type and the colour red effected cohesion and reinforced coherence through salience. The woman's hand and the man's grasping of his belt buckle positioned to the right of the man's torso appeared to signal the implied sexual interaction as a new entity while the placement of the precautionary statement on top positioned it as the ideal solution over the reality of AIDS, seen at the bottom of the visual.

With this affirmation of the usefulness of social semiotics in analysing meanings in multimodal communication, the next chapter details the procedure to the application of Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework to the analysis of ten Singapore teacher recruitment commercials to surface changes in teacher requirements and education objectives.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework was applied to ten teacher recruitment commercials broadcasted by the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) from 1999 to present. The commercials were obtained from and confirmed with the MOE as the available collection, then grouped into chronological sets to facilitate analysis. The 1999 "Education" campaign comprises three available commercials out of four, "Mathematics", "Geography" and "Chemistry", the fourth "Physics" being not locatable. These commercials employ similar designs but comprise different plots. The 2002 "If You Teach Me How" campaign features one commercial with two different ending visuals of a boy and a girl respectively. 2006 "Making Lessons Come Alive" is a solo advertisement depicting four teaching scenarios while 2009 "Teacher" comprises verbal narrations of individuals presented in two commercials. The case studies advertisements from 2011 to 2013, "Mrs Chong", "Mrs Cordeiro" and "Mr Kumar" have been consolidated together for their similar content scope featuring one-teacher case study accounts. "Mr Kumar" is still employed as the MOE's current teacher recruitment campaign. Videos of these commercials are enclosed for reference in the digital folder accompanying this dissertation.

Each commercial was next demarcated into plot or event segments; adopting a similar process as identification of experiential, interpersonal and textual themes under functional grammar (Butt et al. 2000), the commercials were sectioned at points of change in represented participants and/or actions, mood or setting. Meaning-making semiotic resources were analysed to reveal interpersonal, ideational and textual

meanings contributing to the messages conveyed. Table 1 below shows the semiotic resources employed in the examination of the commercials and their corresponding metafunctions under the social semiotics framework.

Semiotic Resource	Metafunction Meanings
Social distance	Interpersonal: intimacy, engagement
Horizontal angle	Interpersonal: involvement, engagement
Vertical angle	Interpersonal: power
Gaze	Interpersonal: demand/ offer, intensity
Inferred vectors	Ideational: reaction processes
Gesture	Interpersonal: sign function i.e. action
Material vectors	Ideational: action processes
Coordinated/ subordinated actions	Textual: cohesion
Gesture – deictic	Interpersonal: engagement Ideational: identification
Gesture – iconic/ metaphoric/ quotable	Ideational: representing action
Gesture – beat	Textual: salience/ intensity, coherence, cohesion
Gesture – turn-taking	Textual: coherence, turn signalling
Muscle relaxation/ tension	Interpersonal: assuredness/ tentativeness i.e. modality
Body forward/ backward angle	Interpersonal: willingness/ unwillingness i.e. modality
Facial expression	Interpersonal: affect
Participant combination – conjoining/ compounding/ fusion	Ideational: participant distinctiveness/ sameness
Symmetry/ visual equality	Ideational: classificational i.e. relational processes
Attributes	Ideational: analytical i.e. carrier-possessive attribute processes
Salience	Ideational: symbolic i.e. carrier-symbolic attribute processes Textual: coherence
Setting	Ideational: locative circumstance
Information value - Left (given)/ right (new) - Top (ideal)/ bottom (real) - Centre (nucleus)/ margin (ancillary/ dependent)	Textual: coherence

Table 1: Semiotic Resources and Meanings

Finally, Teacher representation and roles, student types and education outcome expectations were identified from the commercials and comparatively discussed, together with observations on ethnicity, gender and power representations, surfacing the evolution of teacher requirements and education objectives of Singapore's education system, presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EVOLUTION OF THE SINGAPORE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

This chapter details the analysis of ten MOE teacher recruitment commercials via an examination of semiotic resources employed to establish meanings. Teacher representation and roles, student types and education outcome expectations in the commercials were identified and compared to reveal the changing landscapes and expectations of the Singapore education system.

In the ten advertisements, the messages in six are communicated primarily through visuals while those in the remaining four are iterated mainly via linguistic means of verbal iteration and subtitles. These will be explored through an investigation of the semiotic resources listed in the prior Table 1. The analysis of commercials will first be presented, in chronological order from the earliest set to latest in sections 4.1 to 4.5, following which the comparison will be detailed in Section 4.6.

4.1 1999 “EDUCATION”

“Education” is a collection of four commercials depicting daily-life applications of formal subject knowledge, of which three are available for analysis, presented below.

“Mathematics” commences with an oblique close social distance view of an elderly man absorbed in his task, which has been strategically concealed by the positioning of a boy in front of and facing him. Thus while the elderly man is intimately presented as a non-engaging visual to viewers, his close proximity to the boy suggests engagement

between them, as discussed in Lebaron and Streeck (1997). The frontal angle of the boy's torso engages viewers, prompting speculation of the task, revealed in the next close-up as selecting coins from receptacles. Following this a larger hand places coins into a smaller hand, implied respectively as those of the man and boy before the smiling boy turns and walks away as the elderly man watches, iterating the scenario of a boy receiving change from an elderly shopkeeper, likely for a prior purchase, before leaving his shop, introducing the background to the commercial's message.

The boy is next positioned at far social distance and at an obliquely frontal angle, facilitating full view of his actions from a nearby observer's perspective. He walks then stops to scrutinize the change received, this inferred vector exhibiting his focus on and careful checking of the amount while the following close-up offer visuals increase viewer engagement while presenting represented participant actions as information (van Leeuwen 2005): salience of the boy's maneuvering of the coins in his palm highlights his totaling of actual change received while his aside thoughtful gaze returning to them symbolizes his mental calculation of the correct amount he should have gotten. His subsequent actions of blinking then smiling as he turns and runs back signify his realization of having received miscalculated change, prompting his reaction to return to the shop. The above analysis reveals the commercial's message of the boy's application of his knowledge of mathematical concepts in checking change received in an actual purchase transaction, conveying the message of mathematical competency in action.

The final scene employs demand smiling gazes between the boy and the shopkeeper to express their positive social interaction, as explicated in Finnegan (2002). The boy approaches the shopkeeper, smiling and gazing directly at him, then brings his hand forward to examine its contents, these inferred vectors communicating his acknowledgment of both entities in turn. The following combination of material and inferred vectors formed respectively by the extension of his hand and his gaze towards the shopkeeper reinforces the intensity of this scene while the next close-up of the boy placing a coin in the shopkeeper's palm emphasizes his returning of additional change the shopkeeper had erroneously given. The ending close personal distance perspectives of implied reciprocal smiling gazes between the shopkeeper and the boy engage viewers with both parties' mutual affirmation of the gesture. This concluding segment conveys the boy's rectification of the erroneous monetary transaction, explicating favourable social outcomes of knowledge in practice before the text "Mathematics:★" appears on screen, commending the boy's application of mathematical skills.

In "Geography", the visual salience of a cloudy sky, the close-up of a girl gazing up then looking down thoughtfully and the clock highlights the girl's concern with weather and passage of time. The next scene shows an umbrella being drawn, following which the girl is positioned at far social distance, walking outdoors with it and gazing upwards, altogether symbolizing the girl's deduction of oncoming rain, which was made via her observation of natural elements as wind, denoted by the following visuals of flapping hung-out laundry and moving grass. The next oblique public distance view of her hurrying facilitates viewer uninvolved observation (ibid.), leading to a zoom-in of her continual skyward gaze and the visual of thicker clouds

emphasizing her increasing anxiety as she observes weather elements implying impending rain. This segment presents for observation a girl's culminating worry about imminent rainy weather, which was deduced from her observation of weather element changes, signalling her transference of climate knowledge from textbook understanding to real-life application.

In the second segment, a departing bus reveals an older boy positioned frontally at far social distance, standing and gazing out from a bus-stop amidst a downpour, then sitting as he continues gazing at the rain, engaging viewers at bystander perspective with his situation of being stranded due to heavy downpour. Looking towards screen left he smiles as the girl with the umbrella appears and approaches, the next close-up attracting viewer attention with his smiling gaze on her as he brushes her forehead transiting to her reciprocating smile, these gestures and resulting similar positive responses of both represented participants facilitating interpretation of their relationship as siblings via visual equality (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). It is deduced that the girl, anticipating rain, was worried about her brother getting caught in it, prompting her to fetch him with an umbrella. The following text "Geography: ★" affirms the girl's employment of geographical knowledge, fading to a direct far social distance back view of the girl and her brother walking away under the umbrella, positioned on screen right representing new information (ibid.), engaging viewers with the new perspective that academic knowledge can be applied in useful real-life problem solving as inferring bad weather. This segment informs viewers of the positive effects of authentic knowledge application to problem solving, via the girl's preempting of her brother getting caught in the rain through her observations of the geographical aspect of weather.

“Chemistry” depicts a girl applying Chemistry knowledge in creating a painting; the visuals of a painting canvas undergoing laboratory processing and the close-up of glass flasks containing coloured liquids symbolize laboratory procedures while the oblique close personal distance view of half a girl’s face exhibiting a focused downwards gaze calls attention to her concentration. Together with the following visual of a concentrated colour fluid diffusing in a container of blue liquid zooming out to an overhead view of swirling blue liquid in a beaker symbolizing the dissolving of the concentrated colour fluid, this segment presents a girl’s focussed preparation of chemical solutions.

The next visual returning to her unsmiling lower face perpetuates her focus while the implication of a dropper withdrawing blue liquid from a test tube and dripping it onto a surface denotes her usage of it. The following close-up of the girl’s side profile and shifting gaze leads to a frontal visual of her transferring fluid between test tubes, reinforcing viewer attention on her concentration on her task, after which a brush dips into a beaker of red fluid as test tubes of coloured liquids are displayed, altogether communicating her extensive preparation and use of these fluids.

Subsequent visuals show the prior blue droplets being brushed and the girl positioned obliquely at far social distance, holding a beaker of coloured liquid in one hand and implied to be brushing a surface with the other while a retort stand gripping a test tube is displayed with a rack of test tubes in the foreground for prominence (van Leeuwen 2005). These emphasize the girl’s use of colourful chemical solutions as she works with brushes, symbolizing painting. An older woman gazes towards viewers at similar proximity from behind a wall, likely at the girl, breaking into a fond smile, engaging

viewers to her affectionate regard signifying her as the girl's mother and expressing affirmation of her daughter's activity. The following frontal far social distance visual of a completed painting in front of which the girl sits back facing viewers on screen right emphasizes her as new information, iterating her creative use of knowledge across subjects as Chemistry and Art in her employment of chemical procedures for artwork creation. She straightens her posture and the screen transits to her frontal smiling gaze that conveys her satisfaction with her accomplishment of the painting. The following text "Chemistry:★" endorses the girl's innovative application of her subject knowledge in Chemistry to another area as Art while the following reiterated back view of her on screen right in front of her painting reinforces the commercial's message that knowledge may be harnessed beyond its subject scope for exceptional outcomes.

In the commercials, the employment of semiotic resources of gaze, gesture and facial expression creates engaging visuals, as iterated by Martinec (2001). These convey the message of subject competency via practical application of academic knowledge, reiterated by the common tagline "Beyond grades. Beyond the classroom.", in social situations such as monetary transactions, problem identification and solution such as foreseeing and circumventing adverse weather, and personal pursuits such as creative cross-curricular knowledge use. Students have been portrayed as competent academic learners and skillful knowledge users, achieving the expected education outcome of being adept at applying academic knowledge in practical situations, thus requiring teachers to be efficient in imparting knowledge and encouraging its application.

4.2 2002 “IF YOU TEACH ME HOW”

Unlike “Education”, the messages in “If You Teach Me How” are communicated linguistically through children voiceovers, supported and enhanced through visuals. The commercial begins with a stylized close-up visualization of neuron movement in a human brain with background sounds of children laughter, symbolizing children’s happy thoughts. Employed as scenario transition throughout the commercial, it links the scenes into a coherent clip conveying the aspirations of children.

The first scene features a girl voiceover saying “I can touch lives and help others” as an outstretched child’s hand on screen right, interpreted as new information, is met in a handshake by a larger older-looking hand from screen left against the background of a red rose, symbolic of love. This scene positions the child as a new entity in people’s lives, making positive connections in compassion, reinforcing the linguistic message of children desiring to make a difference to others. Next is an oblique close social distance view of a boy, presenting an engaging visual of him looking and smiling at a spinning gyroscope in his hand, its gyration signifying attainment of equilibrium and balance. Together with the silhouette backdrop of a boy swimming alongside a dolphin as a boy voiceover says “I can save the Earth”, this visual is interpreted as conveying children’s wishes of saving the planet through the balanced and harmonious co-existence of mankind and his natural environment, represented by the balancing gyroscope and the swimming boy and dolphin. The continuing phrase “and create wonders” together with the visual of a boy gazing upwards and running happily with outstretched arms amidst flying birds and blue skies extend the message of children’s desires to create a better world for all living things.

The following oblique close social distance scene of two girls playing hand games against the backdrop of a sunflower field, their smiling gazes on each other as a girl voiceover says “I can make my dreams come true” portrays a compelling visual depicting attainment of happiness through togetherness. A boy next smiles and gazes upwards against a celebratory fireworks backdrop and places his right fist across his chest in the Singaporean patriotic gesture, symbolizing his love for the country, reinforcing the boy voiceover’s message “and do my country proud”. This segment thus conveys children’s confidence of achieving goals in unity, and out of patriotism as signalled in the latter visual, thus bringing pride to the nation.

The next visual of a girl wearing a pair of wings, hands outstretched in pretend flight and smiling against a starry sky backdrop complements the girl voiceover’s message “I can fly to the Moon”, representing children’s belief in their abilities to attain even wildest dreams as visiting the Moon. The following chorus of children voiceovers proclaims “I can do all these and more” as the visual of neuron brain activity zooms out to the engaging close personal distance view of a child smiling directly at viewers, which in one version of the commercial shows a boy while another features a girl. The respective boy and girl voiceovers persuade with the tagline “If you teach me how”, reinforced on screen, which transits to the text “TEACH. Mould the Future of Our Nation.”. This final segment emphasizes the positive message that children can achieve their aspirations if they are taught how to, presenting a compelling call-to-action to be a teacher who shapes children’s future, hence that of the nation.

The above analysis reveals the commercial’s employment of a similar semiotic resource set as “Education”, featuring positive gestures such as handshakes, happy

facial expressions and mainly offer gazes, generating salient visuals that connote symbolic meanings (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), of children's optimistic outlooks and earnest desires. This complements the verbally communicated message of children attaining selfless goals and extraordinary ambitions with zeal and confidence, the final represented participant direct gaze and tagline persuading viewers to be teachers who would inspire students. Compared to the emphasis on student attainment of academic competency in "Education", "If You Teach Me How" presents a greater vision of students as aspirational youngsters with the desires to make a difference to the people and environment around them, realizing their dreams through passion, solidarity and self-belief. Teachers should then instill in students positive attitudes towards self and others, on top of equipping them with skills and knowledge, to facilitate achievement of their goals and ambitions. The resulting education outcome expectation is revealed as students who have the expertise and belief to be dream achievers and change makers.

4.3 2006 "MAKING LESSONS COME ALIVE"

"Making Lessons Come Alive" features four classroom scenarios in which students are depicted as experiencing phenomena and events not logically possible within the scenario contexts, through their teachers' lessons, conveying the message of teachers making lessons come alive for their students.

In the first scenario, the camera pans left as a boy gazes up with a focused expression, likely at the teacher, positioned obliquely at far personal distance as seated amidst his classmates, presenting an engaging visual of his attentiveness during class. He gazes

down at his breath as he exhales visibly, his eyes widening as he smiles, conveying his amazement at his breath visibility, which phenomenon is observed to elicit a similar astonishment from the girl in the foreground of the next visual, viewed obliquely in a horizontal row of students exhaling. Another girl looks intently at her desk then in surprise as it develops a layer of ice, following which she looks up gaping, presumably at the teacher, communicating her incredulity at the formation of ice on her desk. The teacher is next shown in front of a projector screen displaying a snowscape titled “Antarctica Sub-Zero Climate”, gesticulating and speaking while the visual zooms in to her agonized facial expression as a gust of wind blows. This scenario thus conveys students’ untypical experience of Antarctica’s freezing climate in the classroom and their fascination with it, resulting from their teacher’s compelling account, iterating teachers’ effectiveness in delivering vicarious experiential lessons.

The second scenario shows moving airplane shadows falling on a building and a boy walking and reading in front of it, implying the passing by of low-flying airplanes. The boy stops and gapes upwards, communicating amazement at what he sees in the sky. Students standing around cannons gaze up similarly from their books as the camera zooms up and out to show the same airplane shadows moving across their site, the scenes conveying students’ mesmerized attention on the implied passing aircrafts. The cannon monuments signal the setting as a historical war site; together with the implied aircrafts these reinforce the message of students’ intriguing sighting of war-time low-flying fighter planes while conducting an on-site field study. The next centralized, far social distance visual of a teacher standing between two students, talking and gesturing draws viewer focus to his interaction with the students, then

facilitates the message of the teacher transporting his students back to historical war times through effective lesson delivery as the close-up walk-past of a student transforms the scene with men in historic uniforms surrounding the threesome, preparing artillery and scrutinizing the sky. The following close-up shows the teacher talking animatedly as his enthralled students gaze in the direction of his pointing, then meeting their gazes in turn, presenting a compelling picture of engaged student-teacher interaction. In this scenario, teachers are portrayed as energized storytellers drawing students into historical events through captivating narrations, highlighting teachers as dynamic instructors adept at effecting real learning through student engagement.

Younger students are depicted next as a girl paints at her easel, shot from far personal distance at an oblique low angle that accords power, as examined in Schubert's (2005) study, emphasizing her competency in and focus on her task that was next thwarted by strong vibrations signified through the movement of paintbrushes and water jug in the foreground as she turns her attention to them, looking shocked. Two startled students turn around from their work and a boy lowers his book on dinosaurs gaping in horror as huge moving shadows fall on them, signified as being cast by a dinosaur outside the classroom via a huge plated spiky tail, the cause of their anxiety. The next oblique far social distance visual of the teacher putting her arm around a student exhibits the teacher's caring disposition while the inferred vectors of smiling gazes of both parties on the student's dinosaur model then of the teacher on her student while engaging her in conversation express both parties' affirmation of the student's work and the teacher's positive interaction with her student. This segment iterates students' vivid encounters with prehistoric creatures effected through the teacher's warm

enthusiasm that imparts knowledge and develops subject competency in students, positioning teachers as zealous educators who create conducive environments to facilitate students' learning.

The final scenario begins with the centralized visual of a calculator suspended in mid-air amongst on-task students in a classroom, drawing viewer attention to its exhibition of the phenomenon of zero gravity. The student beside the calculator gazes at it as it rises, a look of wonderment on her face. Other students express a similar awe as various items float up, a male student extending his finger to touch a floating pencil which spins away, making him smile, conveying his marvel. Together with the prominent title "Physics" on his book in the foreground, these visuals communicate students' amazement at experiencing weightlessness during a Physics lesson, the concept of which is implied as being expressively articulated by the teacher via gazing at and gesturing towards a planetary system model in the foreground as he explains before turning towards the students to engage them, the words "Zero Gravity" on the whiteboard in the background affirming the topic of instruction. Depicting the teacher as skillfully imparting the scientific concept of zero gravity, this scenario exemplifies teachers as subject experts proficient in engaging lesson delivery. The frontmost globe transits to the tagline "Making Lessons Come Alive" then morphs into a real planet, reinforcing the commercial's theme of vicarious lessons before the text "Inspire. Be a teacher." above the corporate logo concludes with an imperative call-to-action to be a teacher who inspires.

In these scenarios, facial expression has been predominantly employed to convey feelings and reactions, as in "Education" and "If You Teach Me How", such as the

teacher communicating the harshness of Antarctica's climate via her pained look and the awed expressions of students signalling their incredulity at experiencing zero gravity. Yet, contrasting with the prior two commercials in which teachers are not depicted, teachers in "Making Lessons Come Alive" have been portrayed as animated instructors and proactive mentors via the employment of gestures, such as the male teacher's lively recounts of historical events and the female teacher's encouraging actions and responses to her student's work, explicitly portraying teachers in engaging interactions with students, communicating the message of dynamic teachers who captivate students via compelling lessons that effect real learning, reinforced by the tagline. This commercial thus presents teachers as effective and inspiring educators, able to provide authentic experiences to engage students and enhance their learning, even for rarely experienced phenomena, historical topics and abstract scientific concepts. Students are portrayed as conscientious and responsive on-task learners while the education outcome expectation is revealed to be real and engaged learning through experiential lessons.

4.4 2009 "TEACHER"

"Teacher" comprises two similar advertisements featuring people from all walks speaking about the impacts their teachers have made in their lives.

Both commercials commence with individuals' recollections of their interactions with their teachers. In "Teacher 1" a man comments that his teacher always had an issue with his handwriting, looking slightly exasperated, while the following woman remarks that her teacher always picked on her even though he knew she was shy.

These statements communicate students' retrospection of teachers' expectations in peripheral aspects as penmanship and outspokenness, as well as their bothersome nagging, represented by the next man, shaking his head in vexation as he voices his dread at his teacher's long lectures. "Teacher 2" communicates a similar reminiscence, but of teachers challenging students to go beyond their limits, expressed via the woman who iterates her teacher's quizzing on Geography when she prepared for History and vice versa, the groom reminiscing his being coerced by his teacher into reading a poem he wrote to her and the man contemplating on never receiving easy answers from his teacher. The first and third scenarios convey teachers' stimulation of students' critical thinking such as in answering impromptu questions and students' own queries respectively, while the second expresses pushing students beyond comfort zones as reading poetry aloud. These follow with the common visual of a lady divulging her annoyance with her teacher's questioning of her passion, signifying teachers' purposeful igniting of students' awareness of their interests. In these first segments, the linguistically-communicated messages capture viewer attention via their use of seemingly grouching tones and negatively connoted words and phrases of "issue", "picked on", "annoying", "made me" and "never" in describing teachers' actions and "dreaded" in expressing typical student responses to them, atypical of teacher recruitment advertising. While "Teacher 1" iterates teachers' focus on even non-academic areas and "Teacher 2" highlights teachers' honing of soft skills in students, the following same female speaker visual in both commercials generates symmetry (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), reinforcing teachers' goal of rousing students' passions.

The following common text “The difference a teacher makes is felt long after the class is over” conveys an affirmative attitude towards teachers’ impact on students, creatively contrasting with the prior griping stances to reinforce the underlying message that students are affected by trying episodes with their teachers, but in positive ways, exemplified in the next segments. In “Teacher 1”, the first man is revealed to be a doctor via the oblique close social distance view of him conducting a checkup on a child, who while admitting non-improvement in handwriting, reinforced by the following oblique close-up of his scribbling on a form, hints that his career achievement might compensate for it. The following woman credits her teacher for her transformation into a debater and a lawyer, depicted in the next engaging frontal close social distance visual to be in discussion with a colleague. The second man iterates fond remembrance of his teacher as he now transfers the same incessant concerned nagging onto his children, exemplified via frontal close social then personal distance visuals of him interacting with his daughter. These scenarios exhibit teachers’ inspiring impact on students, not only in academic hence professional achievement, but also in potential development and character growth respectively while the first and third scenarios in “Teacher 2” convey attainment of personal excellence through spurring by teachers as respectively obtaining double Honours in History and Geography and having a questioning mind, explicated via close social and personal distance portrayals of these individuals engrossed in their work. The second scenario with the bride iterating the teacher’s reading of the same poem for them at their wedding positions teachers as sentimental and personal mentors who remember their students.

The commercials next feature a common visual of the previously shown lady revealing her passion for children as the reason for her being a teacher, interspersed with close and far social distance visuals of her interacting with and teaching students before she thanks her teacher, conveying her gratitude to her teacher for helping her discover her passion, reinforcing children as the focus in teaching, and presenting a subtle call-to-action to individuals passionate about children to become teachers. Next, the individuals thank their respective teachers before the text “TEACH You’d be amazed at the difference you can make” appears on screen. This concluding section thus communicates students’ remembrance of and gratitude towards their teachers for their guidance, reinforcing the gratification one could expect as a teacher who impacts lives.

Building on the teacher characteristics iterated in the prior advertisements, “Teacher” additionally projects teachers as mentors, linguistically via the phrase “the difference a teacher makes” signalling the transformative effects teachers have on their students, and verbally via phrases such as “I’m sure he’s why” in which students accrue their achievements to their teachers and “repeating them to my kids, and remembering her fondly” expressing such value of teachers’ guidance that it is passed on to the younger generation. They are concerned with not only academic goals but also holistic aspects of students’ development such as personal qualities, life skills and character, whose vocation to inspire and nurture stems from their passion for children. Students are presented as resilient and positive learners who appreciate and take teacher guidance constructively for personal development, thus revealing the education outcome expectation as students who are equipped with knowledge for success, skills for competency and personal values for character growth.

4.5 2011-2013 “CASE STUDIES”

This section presents the accounts of three teachers who have inspired and impacted students. While “Mrs Cordeiro” describes the teacher from her students’ perspectives, “Mrs Chong” and “Mr Kumar” narrate the teachers’ encounters with and mentoring of individual students.

4.5.1 2011 “MRS CHONG”

In “Mrs Chong”, a man visits his alma mater and walks down memory lane, recalling himself as a hardworking student whose academics suffered as a result of his family’s financial situation, and how his teacher Mrs Chong had helped him academically and motivated him through tough times. On an occasion, he had joined Mrs Chong and her family for dinner and had thanked her for it. To her reply then that he could buy her dinner when he becomes successful, he has now returned to fulfill it.

The commercial begins by stating its content as based on a real-life account, generating a sense of authenticity to increase buy-in to its messages, which transitions to the side view of a car against a building compounds backdrop. A well-groomed man emerges from the car and surveys the environment, both projected obliquely at far social distance to construe a single compounded offer image representing to viewers his ownership of the car (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), signalling success in life. His body at a forward angle expresses eagerness (Martinec 2001), as the camera zooms in on his relaxed but pensive expression evolving into a slight smile, altogether conveying a positive mood of nostalgia. Positioned at far social distances, students

through towards viewers at an obliquely frontal angle smiling and chattering, presenting a visual depicting enjoyment of school life, following which is a side perspective of the man walking along a corridor, exhibiting his return to the school he attended. Contrasting with the above offer images is the next engaging frontal close-up of classroom signs “A01-03” and “SEC 3E1”, linking with the following scene of the man looking in obliquely from outside a classroom to emphasize this venue as the man’s classroom. The commercial commences with the message of reminiscence and gratitude via depicting a successful alumnus returning to his alma mater; iterated as an adaptation of a true story, it seeks to resonate emotively with and engage viewers. This segment depicts students as enthusiastic learners who enjoy the school experience and highlights the education outcome expectation of students becoming outstanding individuals with good values, exemplified through the man’s remembrance of his school after achieving success.

The man’s gaze leads to his flashback, signalled by the past date on the blackboard, in front of which a boy turns to engage viewers with his direct smiling gaze, specifying him as the cheerful younger version of the man. The next oblique view of him writing at his desk and looking up as the camera zooms in on his focused expression depicts him as a conscientious schoolboy. The boy’s next unsmiling close-up frontal gaze draws viewer attention with an obvious mood change and transports the setting away from the classroom, his teary eyes and pursed lips expressing sadness and tension. This despairing mood is reinforced via a similar close-distance direct gaze of a teary younger girl positioned obliquely, who then gazes down, their similar emotions allowing for interpretation of them as siblings. The following far social distance back view of the boy on screen left, representing given information, gazing at the

apartment exterior on screen right showing payment-demanding graffiti, representing new information, highlights the family's new predicament of entanglement with illegal moneylenders.

Following far social distance obliquely frontal visuals of the boy taking orders and carrying food present the scenario of him working at a food-stall at night, inferred from the clock showing five past ten and dark sky. He is subsequently shown sleeping in class; a female teacher walks past and pats him on the shoulder to wake him, the scene zooming out to a classroom of students engrossed in work, both boy and teacher turning to make silent eye contact before resuming their respective activities, the atmosphere of seriousness indicating a formal assessment in progress. The next public distance visual presents the boy with a male teacher, the former silent while the latter gesticulates agitatedly holding a sheaf of papers, these beat gestures saliently signalling his displeasure with the boy (McNeill 2005), the reason for which is implied in the following close-up visual of a circled "Fail" written above failing script marks expressing the boy's poor performance in his examination.

The female teacher and boy are next seen from close personal distances at obliquely frontal angles to each other, communicating their engaging close interpersonal proximity. Looking up to gaze at the boy concernedly, the teacher asks "What happened, Edwin?" with an emphatic nod that invites response, expressing the teacher's genuine worry about the boy's personal situation beyond academics. The boy looks up with tears running down his cheek to reply "I'm really very tired. Really.", signifying trust in his teacher via confession of his helplessness, to which the teacher looks away contemplatively, conveying her deliberation on his predicament.

These flashback scenes present an assiduous student whose studies deteriorated with his diversion of energy into after-school work to alleviate family financial problems, generating concern from his teacher, conveying educators' focus on students' academic performance as well as personal well-being. The student type highlighted here references good students who are unable to perform optimally in school due to family problems. The teacher is portrayed as assertive yet caring, waking student gently to get him back on task and privately conversing with him to discover the cause of his academic deterioration, this latter scenario also positioning teachers as approachable and trustworthy, that students can confide in them in confidence. Interestingly, the harsher reprimanding teacher is portrayed by a male; differences in portrayal of male and female teachers in the commercials will be further discussed in Section 4.6.

The boy and teacher are next presented respectively as demand and offer images at far social distance in an empty library, calling attention to the boy's focus as the teacher teaches, the scene zooming in to signal the boy's progress via the teacher's affirming nod. In the following classroom scenario, reverse positioning of boy and teacher in respectively offer and demand images continues to show the boy conscientiously learning, then zooms out to emphasize the teacher's concentration on the lesson. The empty venues suggest these sessions are conducted outside curriculum hours, yet both student and teacher continue to put in their best efforts in learning and teaching respectively. The boy is next observed as joining the teacher and her family for dinner. The scene zooms in as the teacher ladles a bowl of soup and places it in front of the boy with a smiling gaze. He thanks her for dinner as she serves him food. This scene exhibits the teacher's care for the boy's well-being, on top of his studies, via having

him to dinner as well as her maternal gestures of picking food for him, to which the boy responds with gratefulness. Reciprocating smile vectors from the teacher and her husband signal their acknowledgement of the boy's gratitude, following which the teacher replies that he could treat her when he becomes successful, to which the boy gazes at the teacher with a slight nod of his head, then faces forward with a determined expression, expressing a spurring by her words to succeed in life. This segment communicates teachers' commitment towards rendering academic support to students and looking out for their welfare, represented by the teacher's provision of additional coaching and ensuring student's basic needs as meals are met. Teachers are portrayed as dedicated and nurturing professionals who are as altruistic possible in providing assistance to needy students. They should also be change-makers who use every teachable moment to motivate students to rise above their situations and strive towards their objectives. Students are depicted as hardworking and earnest learners who reciprocate kindness with a motivation to excel. The education outcome expectation here would thus be youths who are not only knowledge-equipped, but also mature and resilient achievers of personal goals.

Next positioned at far social distance amidst a group of men, the boy is observed peddling pirated CDs, which scene zooms out to reveal the setting of a shop-house pavement. Policemen rush in and the group makes a frenzied escape amidst shouts of "mata", the colloquial term for police, these visuals altogether projecting the illegal nature of the peddling activity. The boy is subsequently shown handcuffed between two policemen, one of whom holds him by the shoulder and arm, all facing the open door of a police car, signifying his arrest. Back towards viewers, the boy looks up rightwards, the next obliquely frontal close-up showing his despaired gaze as the

policeman in the background looks gravely at him, presenting the compelling visual of his remorse in the face of impartial law. The next oblique near visual of an empty classroom seat, zooming out to show students around it working diligently under teacher supervision leads to the obliquely frontal tearful gaze of the boy's teacher, emphatically conveying the boy's absence from school due to his arrest for illegal hawking and the teacher's resulting devastation, explicating teachers' genuine care for their students.

The teacher's continual reaching out to the boy, exemplifying teachers' unrelenting concern for their students, is next depicted. A close-up oblique shot of the boy zooms out as incoming text notification sounds prompt him to check his mobile phone while washing dishes in a coffee-shop kitchen, construing the boy as undertaking menial work. The text "how are you, edwin?" appears on screen, interpreted as a message from his teacher that he reads, to which he closes his phone without replying, expressing a contrasting jaded attitude towards his teacher's concern, hinting at his resignation to life. The following public and far distance visuals of him receiving similar texts in various locations, which words are shown increasingly fewer on screen exhibit his decreasing interest in reading his teacher's messages and increasing apathy. The teacher's final message "didn't you have bigger dreams, edwin?" conveying her perceptive urging appears to affect him, observed via his heavyhearted expression, dejected head-down gaze and pursed lips, after which he looks up with a flick of his eyes signalling brushing aside of thoughts. His next casual upwards gaze, following downwards glance as he hesitates then exhales resignedly and looks up depict his acknowledgement and dread of a familiar entity, revealed subsequently as his teacher, presented at a frontal angle from close social distance with a reproachful gaze to

emphasize her rebuke of his abandonment of his dreams. This scenario communicates the teacher's ceaseless spurring of her student before a male voiceover calls out "Mrs Chong", ending the flashback to link to the final scene.

Observed obliquely from close personal distances, the visuals of an older-looking teacher bent over her work, glancing up as she hears her name and breaking into a faint smile of recognition and the man smiling as he says "It's time for our dinner." following which the teacher smiles and nods engage viewers with the depiction of the student returning to buy his teacher dinner, as she had previously mentioned, thus the message of repayment of a teacher's care with gratitude. The text "You never forget a good teacher" expands on screen and follows with the far perspective of the man walking alongside his teacher in conversation, reinforcing the message that students remember good teachers who have guided them. Following text "TEACH You'll be amazed at the difference you can make" and a similar flashback visual of the boy walking with his teacher present a persuasive call-to-action to be a teacher who makes a difference.

The plot twist and final scenes express the boy's degeneration and his teacher's anguish but persistent belief in him, conveyed via her frequent texts to and finally her appearance in front of the boy, implied as leading to his achievement of success. These communicate the message of educators as not just teachers of knowledge, but also motivators for excellence, in line with the MOE's vision for the teaching service "Lead. Care. Inspire." (Ho 2009) inciting teachers to lead and inspire students to "believe in themselves and to be the best they can be" (ibid.). Teachers have been portrayed as genuinely caring student supports, resilient to student rejection that even

those who have given up on themselves may reacquire faith. They are role models exhibiting values that students can emulate; the teacher's belief in the student likely spurred his belief in himself. Typographical non-use of capitalization in presenting the teacher's text messages conveys approachability (Perry and Wisnom 2003), reinforcing the message of teacher affability. The final expected education outcome, represented by the spirit of gratitude, would thus be exceptional individuals of quality character.

4.5.2 2011 "MRS CORDEIRO"

"Mrs Cordeiro" depicts a gathering of former students of a teacher, chatting and laughing, while snippets of individual conversations about the teacher are highlighted.

In the first segment, the former students are shown interacting with smiling gazes and friendly gestures as high fives, depicting a camaraderie ambience. A woman says to her classmate "Well, she is my reference in all my job applications.", signifying the teacher's understanding of her students extends beyond the classroom to encompass knowledge of personal traits and skills. The following man muses that they have been visiting her annually during Chinese New Year since 1999, twelve years from the year of the commercial, conveying the former students' strong bond with their teacher that does not fade with time. A second woman reminisces that the teacher had entered them into a drama competition in which they did not win but had fun, the teacher still keeping their certificates to-date while another man voices that while they learnt from her, she learnt along with them. These two scenarios highlight the teacher's progressive attitude towards education, valuing the learning process more than the

outcome and perceiving learning as a two-way activity in which students and teachers may learn from and alongside each other. The second woman marvels at how the teacher keeps all their memories with her, signalling the significance of place students have in teachers' minds that they are always remembered, while a third replies affirmatively to an unseen party's query on her memories of the teacher's first day, reminiscing the teacher walking into their classroom and making them write an essay titled "Together We Can Make A Difference", conveying the teacher's objectives of generating awareness in students of their potentials and possibilities, motivating them to be change-makers.

In the second segment, the visual of former students standing or sitting in neat rows against the backdrop of school stage curtains signals the setting as a school hall, in which these former students are getting ready to take a group photograph. With the front row middle seat empty, a man in the front row subsequently points towards screen right, directing the others' gazes, which leads to their applauding. The camera zooms in as a lady teacher walks in, smiling around at her former students as she sits, after which everyone smiles and gazes frontally. This segment communicates these former students' continuing affection for their teacher through their applause, reinforced by the nostalgia highlighted via the retaking of their class portrait years after graduation. The final scenario positions a photographer as taking their picture to display an old photograph of the teacher and her students as the texts "Mrs Serene Cordeiro", "Da Qiao Primary, 1999" and "Still Making A Difference" fade in below it, emphasizing the passage of time since the teacher taught these students while highlighting her continual efforts in making differences in students' lives.

The commercial features primarily oblique offer visuals of represented participants at close or far personal distances, presenting them as observable entities conveying intimate information about their learning experiences and personal interactions with their teacher, their enduring fondness of her exhibited through the warm welcome rendered her and the gesture of retaking their class photograph, highlighting educators as both effective teachers and endearing mentors. Students in “Mrs Cordeiro” are portrayed as learners who are receptive to and appreciative of teachers’ efforts, in making lessons interesting such as through drama competitions, and inspiring them to harness their potentials to realize possibilities. Teachers are positioned as nurturing and caring educators who adopt and inculcate broad-minded attitudes towards learning as valuing process over product and co-learning, understand their students’ characters and competencies, and propel them towards their goals. The education outcome expectation would thus be students who approach learning with open minds and an awareness of their capabilities, catalyzing their undertaking of various possibilities in achieving their ambitions.

4.5.3 2013 “MR KUMAR”

“Mr Kumar” features the real-life account of a delinquent-turned-motivational speaker, who was mentored by his teacher Mr Kumar during his troubled teenage days. Mr Kumar had expressed his belief in and motivated him to change the course of his life, which he effected while being convicted, resulting in his success today.

The first segment depicts a youth being caught on the streets by plain-clothes policemen and convicted in court. Observed from far social distance at an oblique low angle, two men run past the camera exiting at screen left, one after the other, engaging viewers with fast-paced action. A third comes into focus and runs past similarly, the angle elevating to reveal two men running behind him, the distance lag signalling a pursuit of the former by the latter two participants within the setting of a back alley at night. The third man falls and one of the men behind catches up and handcuffs him, the screen zooming in on his infuriated struggle. Together with the sounds of police sirens, this first section is construed as a police chase concluding with capture. A male voiceover passes the verdict “I find you guilty, and you will be convicted.”, overlapping to the next scene with a judge in the background facing a defendant with his back towards viewers in the foreground, the latter drawing viewer attention. As Jewitt et al. (2001) employed equipment, terminology and procedures for contextualization, these two visuals together with the prior announced verdict contextualize this setting as a courtroom in which a trial is in session. The defendant turns right to glance backwards and a woman cries between a younger boy and an older man, both looking disheartened. They are interpreted as his family, mourning his conviction. The camera zooms in on his downwards gaze conveying regret, following which his subdued compliance during hair shave and his curled-up posture in a corner of his cell express dejectedness. As another male voiceover says “Only you can write your future.” he tears, depicting his emotional recollection of advice he had previously received. Commencing with an adverse scenario of a youth being arrested and convicted, this introduction piques viewer curiosity with its seemingly unrelated theme to education. Amidst remorse, the youth recalls his teacher’s advice, this segment thus conveying the message of teachers’ enduring impact on students,

regardless of situation. Contrasting with the rest of the commercials, “Mr Kumar” highlights the ‘bad’ student who deteriorates further into delinquency even with teacher encouragement; teachers are positioned, through the voiceover message, as motivators who see the potential in students.

The next segment commences the youth’s flashback to schooldays with the close social distance visual of a teacher turning around from the blackboard smiling, conveying his cordiality. Observed from the teacher’s perspective at close personal distance over the shoulder, a student is found doodling. Jolted to attention via the teacher’s grasp of his shoulder, the student drops his pen and turns around, revealing him as the youth. He is subsequently depicted in a confrontation with another boy who punches him, to which the youth retaliates, grabbing his shirt. The teacher appears and calls him sternly; the youth smirks and releases the boy to meet the teacher’s glare, then scowls and kicks a door angrily. Featuring rich facial expressions and animated gestures, these scenarios highlight the youth’s wayward behaviour in school, countered by the teacher’s assertive disciplinary stance.

The teacher is next seen approaching a classroom, stopping at its doorway unnoticed and looking in. The following close personal distance shot draws focus to his concerned gaze as he observes the youth speaking animatedly and engaging his classmates, which becomes an affirming smile, signalling replacement of his worries about the youth with an acknowledgement of the youth’s public speaking talent. The subsequent visual positions the youth frontally at far social distance, engaging viewers with his sullen disposition when the teacher calls and approaches him from screen right, at which he looks up then fixes his gaze on the book the teacher hands to him.

With the teacher positioned to the right of the youth representing new information and the youth's focus on the book, both teacher and book are highlighted as new significant entities influencing the youth, this message reinforced by the youth's attitude change upon appearance of the teacher. The youth flips to the back cover then front, conveying a sparking off of his interest in its contents. Both are next shown on another occasion, indicated by the teacher's apparel change, walking together in the school compounds in amiable conversation, signalling their development of an affable teacher-student relationship.

These flashback scenes present the youth as a restless and angsty student whom the teacher takes disciplinary action against. Recognition of the youth's flair for public speaking prompts the teacher to guide him in developing his skills in this area, communicating the message of educators who identify student potential and mentor its development. While students have been portrayed as trouble-makers, good traits that can be nurtured exist in them. Teachers should thus be firm disciplinarians, yet possess a discerning eye for discovering student aptitudes and a calling to nurture them, resulting in the education outcome expectation of student awareness and development of their strengths and talents.

The following scenarios narrate the events leading to the youth's downfall, beginning with his frustration with his family. Positioned obliquely at far social distance, the father reaches out to pat the youth's younger brother during dinner, this gesture reinforcing his verbal message expressing pride in the boy; the mother looks at both in turn, smiling and nodding, expressing agreement. While the parents' gazes on their younger son exhibit their focus on him, the mother's gaze at the father forms an

“imaginary barrier... a sense of disengagement” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:120) that excludes the youth, seated diagonally from his younger brother, conveying neglect imposed on the youth by his parents. All three do not notice the youth’s silent gaze on his brother, communicating both his recognition and jealousy of the attention his brother is getting. The mother’s next affectionate gesture of putting food in his brother’s bowl and saying “eat more” trigger his sarcastic reaction of concern for his brother: standing up and smiling mockingly as he puts more food into his brother’s bowl. His mother gazes up at him worriedly while his brother appears bewildered; his father gestures and commands him to sit down, at which he leaves the table and enters his room, slamming the door and venting his frustration on a guitar, this scenario revealing his unhappiness with his family expressed through his defiance and resentment, resulting in tense relations. After packing he is positioned walking away, implied as leaving home, his mother watching tearfully at the doorway while his younger brother places his hands on her shoulders in a comforting gesture. The close-up side profile of his teary face and his slight head shake as he turns away emphasize his disappointment with his family.

The youth is subsequently viewed from a low angle as he saunters nonchalantly, positioned as having gained power in the form of freedom. Joined next by two men, he kicks at roadside garbage as the two join him, exemplifying delinquent behaviour. The scene transits to his teacher working at his desk in class, gazing up at the empty seat amidst work-engrossed students, implied as belonging to the youth, emphasizing the teacher’s awareness of his absence and resulting concern for him. The following “Boys’ Home” signage attached to barbed fencing and the youth’s repeated yells and smashes of a basketball against the basketball court walls convey the youth’s

frustration at his lock-up, which follows with a sobering signified via his resigned downwards gaze.

These events surface the underlying cause of the youth's unhappiness, manifested in his irate actions and subsequent aberrant conduct, as his misgivings about his family's love for him. Similar to the use of visual symmetry in expressing represented participant relationships in "Geography" and "Mrs Chong", and in reinforcing the generic message of teacher's goal in the "Teacher" commercials, the depiction of the youth's similar violent stances in the above guitar-smashing incident and the previous school confrontation scene iterates the extension of the youth's frustrations from personal to school life. This highlights the possibility of deeper causes of student bad behaviour, such as unresolved inner turmoil, which if unaddressed could be detrimental to students, portrayed as impressionable adolescents susceptible to emotions and impulsivity while teachers are positioned as concerned mentors.

The final segment begins with a flashforward oblique close personal distance view of the youth, presenting an engaging visual of him in pensive thought, transiting to another flashback of him with his teacher on a bench, likely in the school garden, exhibiting a relatively informal setting. Positioned again on the right, the teacher regards the youth as he looks at the book, telling him he has the courage to be different and only he could write his own future, presenting the teacher's advice as new information and guidance to the youth. As with the prior instances highlighting the youth's anger, this repeated positioning of the teacher to the right of the youth reinforces the teacher's mentoring stance. Interestingly, teacher mentoring is depicted after each of the youth's violent outbursts, such visually similar student-action-

teacher-reaction pairs appearing to emphasize the teacher's continuing motivation of the youth. The screen next displays the book's front cover, revealing it as a guide to public speaking, which the youth is next seen reading in his cell, conveying his renewed motivation for self-improvement. This scene highlights the teacher's rendering of advice to the student that results in his regained confidence, the zooming in at each part of the teacher's message reinforcing its impact, emphasizing teachers' ability to significantly influence and rouse students.

The final scene shows an elderly man, the actual teacher in this narrative, viewed at an oblique angle from far personal distance, smiling as a male voiceover says "Thank you, Mr Kumar.". Together with the next similarly oblique far personal distance visual of a man, the actual youth in question, inviting his teacher on-stage as the words "Glenn is now a motivational speaker" appear on screen, these scenes iterate the compelling message of the transformed student's attainment of success and his accruing of it to his teacher during the latter's attendance of his motivational seminar, reinforced via employment of the actual parties in the enactment. The teacher rises to background applause and joins the man on stage, their reciprocal smiling gazes and arms around each other signalling mutual acknowledgement. The following frontal far personal distance visual of the teacher turning to the audience with an appreciative smile as the words "Mr Kumar is still teaching and continues to make a difference" appear on screen communicates the teacher's continuing present-day efforts to inspire students. The visual zooms out to the teacher turning back to the man with an affirmative smile then transits to the tagline "Shaping The Nation One Student At A Time", conveying the commercial's message of the importance inspiring even only one student has on the nation.

This segment iterates the youth's recollection of and gratefulness for his teacher's affirmation and spurring which instilled belief in himself, leading to his achievement of success in life, conveying the message of educators who recognize each student's talents and propel him towards harnessing them for personal growth. While teachers are reinforced as caring motivators inspiring every student in potential development, students have been portrayed as prodigal and appreciative acceptors of teacher guidance, thus achieving the education outcome expectation of youths who, regardless of situation, are unrelenting in their pursuit and attainment of personal excellence.

This collection of commercials reinforces teachers as mentors via detailed portrayals and descriptions of their dedication towards their students, conveying more comprehensive requirements of teachers compared to earlier years, which changes will be highlighted together with shifts in education objectives of the Singapore education system via the comparison of meanings surfaced from the recruitment commercials in the following section.

4.6 CHANGING TRENDS IN THE SINGAPORE EDUCATION SYSTEM

This section summarizes the above analyses of teacher recruitment commercials, a detailed tabular summary of which is found in Appendix 1, and highlights the changing trends of teacher requirements and education objectives in Singapore’s education system.

The semiotic resources of gaze, gesture and facial expression have been observed to be predominantly employed in the commercials communicating messages primarily through visuals, as well as in the earlier linguistically communicated “If You Teach Me How”, with “Making Lessons Come Alive” utilizing mainly gesture and facial expression in conveying meanings, shown in Table 2. Use of these resources create compelling visuals that effectively communicate the commercials’ plots and meanings. In contrast, “Teacher” and “Mrs Cordeiro” used mostly gaze and social distance to enhance their linguistically conveyed messages with supporting visuals.

Commercial	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
Meaning- making Semiotic Resources	- Gaze (offer) - Gesture - Facial expression	- Gaze (offer + final demand) - Gesture - Facial expression	- Gesture - Facial expression	- Gaze (demand) - Social distance (close personal)	- Gaze (offer + demand) - Gesture - Facial expression	- Gaze (offer + final demand) - Social distance (close + far personal)	- Gaze (offer + demand) - Gesture - Facial expression
Elements	- Visuals - Written text	- Spoken text - Visuals - Written text	- Visuals - Written text	- Spoken text - Visuals - Written text	- Visuals - Spoken text - Written text	- Spoken text - Visuals - Written text	- Visuals - Spoken text - Written text

Table 2: Meaning-making Semiotic Resources

The analyses surfaced the trend of more prolific incorporation of the demand gaze in more recent advertising, summarized in Table 2, beginning with “Teacher” employing mainly demand close-ups, following which “Mrs Chong” and “Mr Kumar” interspersed their narratives with demand gazes. Compared to earlier advertisements incorporating mostly offer gazes, these later commercials have been interpreted as purposefully heightening message impact to present stronger calls-to-action via such direct gazes that address and demand reaction from viewers (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Among the commercials in this study, specifically “Teacher” utilized primarily frontal demand gazes at close personal distances throughout both commercials to continually engage viewers intimately as its messages are linguistically iterated. Compared to the other two commercials that similarly employed visuals in complementing their linguistic messages, “If You Teach Me How” and “Mrs Cordeiro”, featuring mainly offer gazes inviting observation that lead to final demand visuals and their respective linguistic messages, “Teacher” makes and maintains the strongest connection with viewers via its positioning of represented participants at confidant proximity and allowing viewers to look them in the eye. This effects a sense of sincerity that heightens viewer emotions to successfully ingrain its message of educators who through their inspiring teaching, make a difference in their students’ lives. It was also observed that while both “Mrs Cordeiro” and “If You Teach Me How” are similarly structured, the latter exudes stronger engagement, achieved via its children voiceovers’ verbal iteration while the tagline is visually presented with a child’s demand gaze, enhancing textuality to present a more persuasive message (Beasley and Danesi 2002), of students desiring to be taught by the viewer, who would be a teacher. The re-employment of such combination of visuals, spoken and

written texts in later commercials commencing from “Teacher” highlights their objectives of being more compelling thus effective advertisements.

While teacher recruitment commercials became increasingly engaging, the messages conveyed too evolved to reflect changes in education objectives and teacher requirements, discussed below. The earliest commercials “Education” and “If You Teach Me How” reveal a focus on the student, acquisition of knowledge and product of education. In “Education”, the education outcome expectation is revealed as student application of academic subject knowledge in practical situations beyond the classroom. The implication for teachers is the requirement to be subject experts and skillful teachers who impart and encourage knowledge application, which would achieve the education objective of competent learners attaining subject proficiency and undertaking its authentic application. Compared to “Education”, “If You Teach Me How” incorporates an additional scope to its education outcome expectation of students striving towards their aspirations equipped with knowledge and values, expressing the requirement for teachers to not just equip students with academic skill sets but also impart positive values and beliefs. The education objective is revealed as students harnessing academic competency and positive attitudes towards achieving aspirations.

Conveying the MOE’s stance shift from imparting content to student engagement (Shanmugaratnam 2005), “Making Lessons Come Alive” highlights the teacher, pedagogy and process of education. With the education outcome expectation of engaged learning, teachers, with support from the ministry, are called to “develop new approaches” and design “more effective pedagogies” to provide authentic learning

experiences (Shanmugaratnam 2005), surfacing the education objective of real learning through quality lesson delivery.

Responding to the emphasis on nurturing future-ready youths with ‘21st century’ critical thinking, communication, collaboration and management skills, backed by solid traditional curriculum knowledge and rooted in values (Ng 2008), the most recent recruitment commercials emphasize both educator and learner, focussing on students’ personal development on top of academic achievement and both the process and product of education. “Teacher” communicates excellent student outcomes of teachers’ impactful teaching, in terms of life achievements, skills competency and inculcated values, seeking to recruit teachers with a passion to nurture the young, with the requirements to administer the core academic curriculum effectively as well as develop students holistically, which would realize the surfaced education objective of students equipped with academic knowledge, essential skill sets and sound beliefs. The final case studies “Mrs Chong”, “Mrs Cordeiro” and “Mr Kumar” further reinforce the nurturing stance by explicating teachers as mentors. In conveying the education outcome expectations of student awareness of personal abilities and a progressive view of learning and achievement of goals, “Mrs Cordeiro” highlights the additional requirements of teachers to possess a broad-minded attitude towards effective teaching and learning, and develop in-depth understanding of students to facilitate character development. In “Mrs Chong”, the education outcome expectation is of youths achieving academic hence life success yet grounded in values, surfacing the requirement of teachers to be dedicated and nurturing educators concerned with both academic goals and student well-being, exemplary models of good values and inspirers of change who spur students towards excellence. The education outcome

expectation expressed in “Mr Kumar” is of students being enlightened of and having resilience in harnessing their talents to achieve personal competency. Teachers should therefore be discerning in recognizing student potential and committed to mentoring and motivating its development in each student. The education objective sieved from these three commercials is thus of students developing their potential, through dedicated efforts of teachers who believe in them, to realize possibilities.

An examination of ethnicity, gender and power represented in the commercials would provide further insight into Singapore’s education landscape. In the following discussion, only dominant represented participants contributing to the commercials’ messages as main characters are examined; tabular summaries of such student and teacher demographics are found in Appendix 2.

It was observed that all the main ethnicities of Chinese, Indian, Malay and Eurasian are represented in the commercials, except in the case studies, this inclusion of all ethnic groups explicating the national value of equality (Chia and Lim 2010). In “Education”, each ethnic group is represented in a separate commercial; while the ethnicity of represented participants in “Chemistry” is ambiguous and possibly Malay or Eurasian, the unavailable fourth commercial would likely depict the absent ethnic group to complete societal representation. “If You Teach Me How”, “Making Lessons Come Alive” and “Teacher” feature higher representation of Chinese in students, providing realistic illustrations of Singapore’s Chinese-dominant society (Singapore Department of Statistics 2014), with “If You Teach Me How” signalling ethnic as well as gender impartiality via the employment of a boy of minority ethnicity and a girl of dominant ethnicity in its respective versions. While the dominant student

represented participants in “Mrs Cordeiro” comprise only Chinese, it is observed that the commercial includes visuals of Indian and Malay represented participants, allowing it to be interpreted as still reflecting actual societal demographics. The ethnic representation of teachers appears to be more evenly distributed; “Making Lessons Come Alive” features four teachers, each representing one of the main ethnicities. While adoption of spouses’ surnames with the salutation “Mrs” in “Teacher” generates ambiguity in the actual ethnicities of such unseen female teachers, of greater significance is the immediate impression created; these teachers have thus been classified under their conveyed rather than actual ethnicities, resulting in a rather balanced representation of three Chinese, three Indian and two of Malay or Eurasian ethnicity. In addition, the commercials feature inter-racial interaction, either between students as in “Mrs Cordeiro” or between students and teachers as in “Mr Kumar”, with the exception of “Education” and “Mrs Chong” where such representation is not contextually possible, reinforcing the notion of harmony between ethnic groups. It is thus concluded that while ethnicity has been equally and faithfully represented in student groups to signal equal education opportunities for all races, as iterated by the ministry on its website (Ministry of Education 2015), the relatively even ethnic distribution of teachers appears to signal equal recruitment opportunities and encourage individuals of all ethnicities to partake in the teaching vocation, in line with Singapore Public Service’s policy of equality (Public Service Division Singapore 2015).

Gender has been represented relatively equally in both students and teachers in the commercials, with the exception of case studies “Mrs Chong” and “Mr Kumar”, emphasizing gender equality in the Singapore education system. Interestingly in “Mrs

Chong”, female teachers have been represented as approachable and nurturing, through the actions of the main teacher represented participant while male teachers have been portrayed as harsher disciplinarians, also seen in “Mr Kumar” where the teacher sternly stops the youth in his confrontation. While male teachers are often perceived as firm disciplinarians (Jones 2007), these scenarios being from actual case studies may thus not be interpreted as stereotypical projections of teacher roles.

For power, teachers have been given the power position for knowledge in all the commercials, either implied as in “Education” or via depiction of teachers at higher levels than students as in the first and last scenarios in “Making Lessons Come Alive”, where teachers stand and students sit. The additional dimension of student development was incorporated starting from “If You Teach Me How”, which together with “Teacher” and “Mrs Cordeiro” have been interpreted as positioning teachers with power for student development, for lack of contextual cues other than the implication that such activities take place in the classroom, where teachers typically have power. The authoritative teacher image was softened starting from “Making Lessons Come Alive”; its second and third scenarios place teachers at the same eye level as students, standing between them and going down to where they are seated respectively, exhibiting no power difference during interpersonal interaction, which continues to be iterated in the most recent commercials “Mrs Cordeiro”, “Mrs Chong” and “Mr Kumar”. The latter two also represent teachers as having no power difference for student development, conveyed via their sitting or standing together with students during personal mentoring sessions, reinforced by such scenarios’ more informal non-classroom settings. These observations highlight the evolving roles of teachers, from

merely imparting knowledge to being mentors who interact personally with students, discover their potentials and inspire them towards personal achievement and success.

To conclude, the Singapore education system has been observed, through its increasingly compelling teacher recruitment advertisements, to be constantly redefining and refining education and the educator, providing equal education opportunities to all students and encouraging all individuals with passion for teaching to be part of the service. From its earliest education objective of student acquisition and application of knowledge, then incorporating development of positive attitudes towards realizing aspirations, it next seeks to actualize authentic learning through effective teaching, all of which require teachers to progress from being just knowledge specialists to educators instilling values and beliefs while delivering efficacious lessons that engage students. In the final phase, the education objective of academically competent students rooted in values and geared with future-ready life skills requires educators' evolution into mentors: still the authority for academic knowledge but with a progressive attitude towards teaching and learning, exemplary role models with good value systems, and possessing zeal and dedication to nurture character, develop potential and inspire excellence in students.

The next chapter discusses issues surfaced from the analyses of the commercials and proposes alternative views and interpretations.

CHAPTER 5

ISSUES AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 THE 'EXCLUSION' OFFER

In “Mr Kumar”, an interesting visual is presented at 0:54 of the family dinner scenario, where the mother’s gaze at the father together with the reciprocal gazes between the father and the youth’s brother exclude the youth from their interaction, illustrated in Diagram 1 as viewed from above, gaze vectors represented by green arrows. This contrasts with the dinner scenario in “Mrs Chong” from 1:33 to 1:34, where represented participants engage with one another via gaze and gesture vectors.

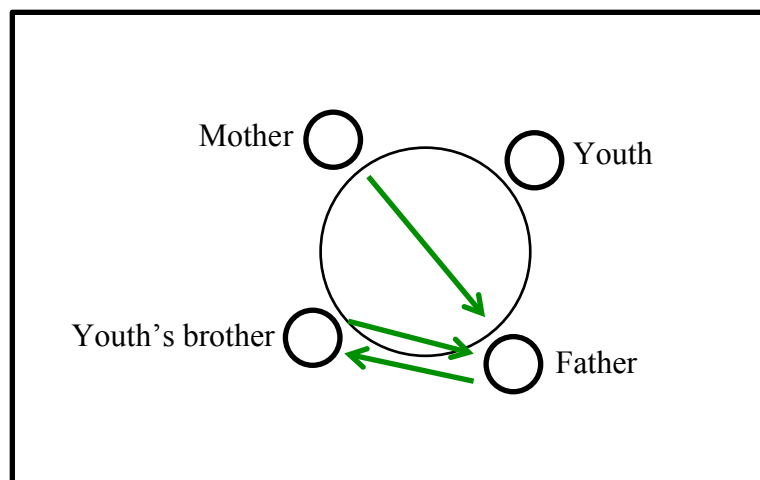


Diagram 1: Family Dinner Scenario Gaze Representation

While all four represented participants are presented as an offer visual to viewers, the parents and the youth’s brother are also presented as such to the youth, positioning him as an observer of their activity. Though all represented participants face one another with the possibility of mutual gazes, the youth is isolated from the family’s interaction via their glances at one another but not at him, rendering him the excluded

represented participant. In contrast, visuals where represented participants are positioned behind or beside other represented participants, or with no possibility of mutual gazes would not convey exclusion, such as at 0:28 in “Making Lessons Come Alive” where the teacher focuses on the female student beside her while the male student at screen right gazes in their direction, connecting him to the pair in a supporting position, at 1:52 in “Mrs Chong” where the policeman gazes at the boy from behind him, interpreted as a contextual background expressing the grimness of the law, and at 0:37 in “Mr Kumar” where the teacher observes the students in the classroom without their knowledge, thus not entailing the students’ reciprocal acknowledgement of the teacher’s presence. It is thus proposed that offer visuals exhibiting deliberate segregation as the above dinner scene in “Mr Kumar” be further sub-classified as ‘exclusion’ offers, which would facilitate more in-depth analysis of meanings conveyed in visual texts.

5.2 INTERPRETATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

The examination of semiotic resources employed in the commercials effectively surfaced meanings reflecting the evolution of education objectives and teacher requirements of Singapore’s education system, yet certain aspects of the commercials surfaced challenges to applying the social semiotics framework for analysis.

While new information was typically signalled through positioning on the right or having represented participants facing rightwards at such elements, inconsistencies were observed. In “Mathematics” and “Mr Kumar”, represented participants as the boy from 0:05 to 0:06 in the former and the men at the beginning of the latter move

towards screen left although they can be interpreted as new information that respectively adds to and introduces the plot. Similarly at 0:16 in “Mrs Chong”, the man moves from left to right, signalling transition from old to new information, but is in effect recalling past memories. These instances have thus been interpreted as stylistic variations adopted in these commercials’ designs rather than exemplifications of information value. Alternative interpretations justify the positioning of the girl in “Geography” on screen left at 0:00, 0:02 and 0:13. Rather than viewing the girl as new information in the first two instances, her upwards glances towards screen right appear to signal the next visuals - the clock and the wind-blown laundry respectively - as items she looks at, hence the actual new entities. At 0:13, her appearance effects a change in the boy’s mood signalled by his smile; this has been interpreted as the new information for this segment.

Though ethnic ambiguity in “Teacher” and gender and ethnic representation in the case studies commercials appear unavoidable due to these commercials’ employment of authentic teacher-student cases, these could have been purposefully chosen over others. In “Teacher” using “Mrs” with spouses’ surnames to reference female teachers not only contribute to a balanced representation of the main ethnicities of Singapore, but also imply that female teachers are typically married, thus leading healthy family lives. This latter notion is reinforced in “Mrs Chong” through the depiction of the female teacher with her husband and children in the dinner scene. The positioning of female teachers in nurturing stances and male teachers in disciplinary positions in the case studies seems to align with and affirm the stereotypical images of female and male teachers (Jones 2007); additionally, the highlighting of a teacher of minority ethnicity in “Mr Kumar” could persuasively encourage more people of minority

ethnicities to join the teaching fraternity. Finally, that both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ students referenced respectively in “Mrs Chong” and “Mr Kumar” are represented by boys may reflect a genuine representation of male students, who more prevalently externalize their problems or exhibit delinquent behaviour compared to female students (Van Der Ende and Verhulst 2005).

5.3 SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS

In Chapter 4, vertical angles employed in the commercials were analysed, surfacing depiction of decreasing teacher power that conveys the MOE’s recent objective of recruiting hence providing teachers able to interact with students more personally, thus “touching hearts and engaging minds” (Shanmugaratnam 2005).

Nevertheless, the perception of teachers in an Asian society as Singapore compared to that in her Western counterparts needs to be taken into account when analysing power in teacher-student interaction. According to Dimmock (1998), many Asian societies traditionally exhibit relatively higher PD (Power-Distance) values compared to Western societies, and is particularly true for countries like Singapore and Hong Kong. It may be interpreted that teachers are still accorded power when interacting with students, regardless of their positioning, that they may be portrayed at the same level as students or lower than them and yet viewed as having power, such as the teacher in “Mr Kumar” from 1:12 to 1:15 sitting and facing his seated students, the male teacher in “Mrs Chong” standing and at eye level with the student yet signalling power via his reprimanding gestures at 0:51 and the female teacher in the same commercial sitting and looking up at her standing former student from 2:34 to 2:43.

Yet, as iterated by Hofstede (1991) and Dimmock (1998) respectively, culture is a learned and mutable phenomenon; the increasing incorporation of Western perspectives and practices in Singapore education, and the resulting changes in pedagogic techniques and objectives would likely further align Singapore's education system with those of other progressive societies around the world.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to surface the evolution of education objectives and teacher requirements of Singapore's education system through an examination of teacher recruitment commercials over time. While the social semiotics framework has been effective in providing insight, this study examined only visual, bodily, linguistic and typographical semiotic resources; the remaining aspect of music and its effect on textual coherence and cohesion, as well as emotive engagement could not be explored due to the constraints of the current paper, and is proposed for further investigation. Additionally, the most recent advertisement "Mr Kumar" deviates from the trend of showcasing 'good' students to exemplify the 'bad' students, likely highlighting Singapore education system's current stance of providing equal opportunities and support to all, even at-risk students, that they too can attain success in life. Building on this observation, further analysis of changing student profiles may be conducted to surface students' evolving needs and would allow the Singapore education system to more efficiently improve on its policies and initiatives, recruiting dedicated and skillful teachers who would nurture and inspire, shaping education hence society into flourishing landscapes.

REFERENCES

Beasley, R. and Danesi, M. (2002) *Persuasive signs: The semiotics of advertising* (Vol. 4). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Butt, D. et al. (2000) *Using Functional Grammar: An Explorer's Guide* (2nd ed.). Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University.

Chia, A. and Lim, A. (2010) '10 Singapore: equality, harmony and fair employment'. In Klarsfeld, A. (ed.) (2010) *International Handbook on Diversity Management at Work: country perspectives on diversity and equal treatment*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 198-217.

Dimmock, C. (1998) 'Restructuring Hong Kong's Schools The Applicability of Western Theories, Policies and Practices to an Asian Culture'. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 26(4), 363-377.

Feld, S. (1984) 'Communication, music, and speech about music'. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 1-18.

Feng, D. and O'Halloran, K. L. (2012) 'Representing emotive meaning in visual images: A social semiotic approach'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(14), 2067-2084.

Finnegan, R. H. (2002) *Communicating: The multiple modes of human interconnection*. Psychology Press.

Hall, E. (1966) *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.

Halliday, M., Matthiessen, C. M. and Matthiessen, C. (2014) *An introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Ho, P. (2009) Address by Ms Ho Peng, Director-General of Education, at the Teachers' Mass Lecture, at 2.30pm on Wednesday, 26 August 2009, Singapore Expo Hall 2 [online]. www.moe.gov.sg/media/speeches/2009/08/26/address-by-ms-ho-peng-at-the-t.php [Accessed June 21st 2015]

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and organisations-software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. McGraw-Hill.

Jewitt, C. et al. (2001) 'Exploring learning through visual, actional and linguistic communication: The multimodal environment of a science classroom'. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 5-18.

Jones, D. (2007) 'Millennium man: constructing identities of male teachers in early years contexts'. *Educational Review*, 59(2), 179-194.

Kress, G. (2010) *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2002) 'Colour as a semiotic mode: Notes for a grammar of colour'. *Visual communication*, 1(3), 343-368.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Lebaron, C. D. and Streeck, J. (1997) 'Built space and the interactional framing of experience during a murder interrogation'. *Human studies*, 20(1), 1-25.

Lee, K. Y. (1959) Text of speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, at the Education Ministry's Rally of Teachers at the Happy World Stadium on Tuesday, December 8, 1959, at 3p.m [online]. www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19591208.pdf [Accessed July 8th 2015]

Machin, D. (2010) *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text*. London: Sage.

Martinec, R. (2001) 'Interpersonal resources in action'. *Semiotica*, 135(1), 117-145.

McNeill, D. (2005) *Gesture and Thought*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Ministry of Education (2015) About Us - The Basis For Survival & Success [online]. www.moe.edu.sg/about/#basis-for-survival [Accessed June 21st 2015]

Ng, E. H. (2008) Speech by Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence, at the MOE Work Plan Seminar 2008, on Thursday, 25 September 2008 at 9.30am at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Convention Centre [online]. www.moe.gov.sg/media/speeches/2008/09/25/speech-by-dr-ng-eng-hen-at-the-moe-work-plan-seminar-2008.php [Accessed May 20th 2015]

Nørgaard, N. (2009) ‘The semiotics of typography in literary texts. A multimodal approach’. *Orbis litterarum*, 64(2), 141-160.

O’Halloran, K. L. (2008) ‘Systemic functional-multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA): Constructing ideational meaning using language and visual imagery’. *Visual Communication*, 7(4), 443-475.

Perry, A. and Wisnom, D. (2003) *Before the brand: Creating the unique DNA of an enduring brand identity*. McGraw Hill Professional.

Public Service Division Singapore (2015) Mission, Vision and Core Values [online]. www.psd.gov.sg/singapore-public-service/mission-vision-and-core-values [Accessed July 8th 2015]

Scherer, K. R. (1995) ‘Expression of emotion in voice and music’. *Journal of voice*, 9(3), 235-248.

Scherer, K. R. and Oshinsky, J. S. (1977) ‘Cue utilization in emotion attribution from auditory stimuli’. *Motivation and emotion*, 1(4), 331-346.

Schubert, T. W. (2005) ‘Your highness: vertical positions as perceptual symbols of power’. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 89(1), 1.

Shanmugaratnam, T. (2005) Speech by Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Minister for Education, at the MOE Work Plan Seminar 2005, on Thursday, 22 September 2005 at 10.00am at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Convention Centre [online]. www.moe.gov.sg/media/speeches/2005/sp20050922.htm [Accessed May 20th 2015]

Singapore Department of Statistics (2014) Population Trends 2014 – Chapter 1 Population (Ethnic Composition) [online]. www.singstat.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/publications/publications_and_papers/population_and_population_structure/population2014.pdf [Accessed July 19th 2015]

Tagg, P. (1999b) Introductory notes to the Semiotics of Music [online]. tagg.org/xpdfs/semiotug.pdf [Accessed January 6th 2015]

Van Der Ende, J. and Verhulst, F. C. (2005) ‘Informant, gender and age differences in ratings of adolescent problem behaviour’. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, 14(3), 117-126.

Van Leeuwen, T. (1999) *Speech, Music, Sound*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2005) *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2006) 'Towards a semiotics of typography'. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*, 14(2), 139-155.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF ANALYSES

Comparison Summary	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
Tagline	Beyond grades. Beyond the classroom.	If you teach me how	Making Lessons Come Alive	NA	NA	NA	Shaping The Nation One Student At A Time
Meaning-making Semiotic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze (offer) - Gesture - Facial expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze (offer + final demand) - Gesture - Facial expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gesture - Facial expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze (frontal demand) - Social distance (close personal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze - Gesture - Facial expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze (offer + final demand) - Social distance (close and far personal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaze - Gesture - Facial expression
Messages Conveyed	- Subject competency via practical application of academic knowledge	- Attainment of selfless goals and extraordinary ambitions with zeal and confidence	- Educators who captivate students via engaging lessons that effect real learning	- Educators who through inspiring teaching, make a difference in students’ lives	- Educators focus on not just students’ academic performance but also their well-being and personal development	- Educators as both effective teachers and endearing mentors	- Educators’ identification of student potential and mentoring of its development, effecting an enduring impact on students, regardless of situation
Teacher Representation & Roles	- Implied: Efficient in imparting knowledge and encouraging its	- Implied: Equip students with skills and knowledge as well as positive	- Effective and inspiring via providing vicarious, authentic	- Implied: Mentors concerned with not only academic goals but also holistic	- Assertive yet caring - Approachable and trustworthy - Dedicated and	- Implied: Nurturing and caring educators with forward-looking attitudes	- Firm disciplinarians - Dedicated mentors with a discerning eye for potential in

Comparison Summary	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
	application	attitudes towards self and others to facilitate achievement of their goals and ambitions	experiences to engage students and enhance their learning	aspects of students’ development such as personal qualities, life skills and character, whose vocation to inspire and nurture stems from their passion for children	nurturing; concerned with not just academics but also students’ personal development and well-being - Resilient change-makers and motivators who relentlessly spur students towards objectives - Role models exhibiting values students can emulate	towards learning and an understanding of students’ characters and competencies, propelling them towards their goals	students and a calling to nurture it, motivating every student in his potential development
Student Types	- Competent academic learners and skillful knowledge users	- Aspirational youngsters with the desires to make a difference to the people and environment around them, realizing their dreams through passion, solidarity and self-belief	- Conscientious and responsive on-task learners	- Resilient and positive learners who appreciate and take teacher guidance constructively for personal development	- ‘Good’ student; - Unable to perform optimally in school due to family problems - Hardworking and earnest learners who reciprocate kindness with a motivation to excel	- Learners who are receptive to and appreciative of teachers’ efforts, in making lessons interesting and inspiring them to harness their potentials to realize possibilities	- ‘Bad’ student; - Trouble-makers but with good traits that can be nurtured - Impressionable adolescents susceptible to emotions and impulsivity - Deteriorates further into delinquency

Comparison Summary	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
							even with teacher encouragement but prodigal and appreciative acceptors of teacher guidance
Education Outcome Expectations	- Students adept at applying academic knowledge in practical situations	- Students who have the expertise and belief to be dream achievers and change makers	- Real and engaged learning through experiential lessons	- Students who are equipped with knowledge for success, skills for competency and personal values for character growth	- Youths who are not only knowledge-equipped, but also mature and resilient achievers of personal goals - Outstanding individuals of quality character	- Students who approach learning with open minds and an awareness of their capabilities, catalyzing their undertaking of various possibilities in achieving their ambitions	- Student awareness and development of their strengths and talents - Youths who, regardless of situation, are unrelenting in their pursuit and attainment of personal excellence
Ethnicity & Gender	Students: - <u>Chinese, Indian, Malay, Eurasian</u> ; all main ethnic groups represented - Equal representation - No inter-racial interaction	Students: - <u>Chinese, Indian, Malay</u> ; main ethnic groups represented - Unequal representation - Inter-racial interaction - Both genders	Students: - <u>Chinese, Indian, Malay, Eurasian</u> ; all main ethnic groups represented - Unequal representation - Inter-racial interaction	Students: - <u>Chinese, Indian, Eurasian</u> ; main ethnic groups represented - Unequal representation - Inter-racial interaction	Student: - <u>Chinese</u> ; dominant ethnic group represented - No inter-racial interaction - Male	Students: - <u>Chinese</u> ; dominant ethnic group represented - Unequal representation - Inter-racial interaction - Both genders	Student: - <u>Chinese</u> ; dominant ethnic group represented - Inter-racial interaction - Male

Comparison Summary	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both genders represented - Equal representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> represented - Equal representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both genders represented - Relatively equal representation <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Chinese, Indian, Malay, Eurasian</u>; all main ethnic groups represented - Equal representation - Inter-racial interaction - Both genders represented - Equal representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both genders represented - Equal representation <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Chinese, Indian, Malay, Eurasian</u>; all main ethnic groups represented - Unequal representation - Inter-racial interaction - Both genders represented - Equal representation 	<p>Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Chinese</u>; dominant ethnic group represented - No inter-racial interaction - Female 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> represented - Relatively equal representation <p>Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Chinese</u>; dominant ethnic group represented - No inter-racial interaction - Female 	<p>Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Indian</u>; minority ethnic group represented - Inter-racial interaction - Male
Power & Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implied: Teachers have greater status and power over students for knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implied: Teachers have greater status and power over students for knowledge and student development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>First and fourth</u> scenarios: Teachers standing while students sitting during whole class contexts; <u>teachers seen from low angle by students</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implied: Teachers have greater status and power over students for knowledge and student development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher walking while student sitting during whole class context; <u>teacher seen from low angle by student</u> → <u>Teachers have greater status and</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implied: Teachers have greater status and power over students for knowledge and student development - Teacher at same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher standing while student sitting during whole class context; <u>teacher seen from low angle by student</u> → <u>Teachers have greater status and</u>

Comparison Summary	1999 “Education”	2002 “If You Teach Me How”	2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	2009 “Teacher”	2011 “Mrs Chong”	2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	2013 “Mr Kumar”
			<p>→ <u>Teachers</u> have greater status and <u>power</u> over students for knowledge</p> <p>- <u>Second and third scenarios</u>: Teachers at same level as students during small group/ individual contexts; <u>teachers at eye level with students</u></p> <p>→ <u>Teachers and students</u> have no status or power difference during interpersonal interaction</p>		<p><u>power</u> over students for knowledge</p> <p>- Teacher at same level as student during personal contexts; <u>teacher at eye level with student</u></p> <p>→ <u>Teachers and students</u> have no status or power difference for student development and during interpersonal interaction</p>	<p>level as students during non-classroom contexts; <u>teacher at eye level with students</u></p> <p>→ <u>Teachers and students</u> have no status or power difference during non-academic interaction</p>	<p><u>power</u> over students for knowledge and discipline</p> <p>- Teacher at same level as student during personal contexts; <u>teacher at eye level with student</u></p> <p>→ <u>Teachers and students</u> have no status or power difference for student development and during interpersonal interaction</p>

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT AND TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Demographics	Ethnic Representation				Gender Representation	
	Chinese	Indian	Malay	Eurasian	Male	Female
1999 “Education”	1	1	1*	1*	2*	2
2002 “If You Teach Me How”	4	1	1	0	3	3
2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	9	1	2	1	6	7
2009 “Teacher 1”	2	1	0	1	2	2
2009 “Teacher 2”	3	0	0	1	2	2
2011 “Mrs Chong”	1	0	0	0	1	0
2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	5	0	0	0	2	3
2013 “Mr Kumar”	1	0	0	0	1	0

Teacher Demographics	Ethnic Representation				Gender Representation	
	Chinese	Indian	Malay	Eurasian	Male	Female
2006 “Making Lessons Come Alive”	1	1	1	1	2	2
2009 “Teacher 1”	2*	1	1	0	2	2
2009 “Teacher 2”	1*	2	0	1*	2	2
2011 “Mrs Chong”	1	0	0	0	0	1
2011 “Mrs Cordeiro”	1	0	0	0	0	1
2013 “Mr Kumar”	0	1	0	0	1	0

* Implied/ ambiguous data