

Multimodal Communication

“Professor May L-Y Wong’s book on multimodal communication is a valuable contribution to the growing literature on multimodal discourse studies. Based on the work of such classical authors as Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress, her studies take an independent and innovative character by focusing on text and image in the Chinese context of Hong Kong. It is especially the variety of her studies that deserve attention, as is the case for magazine ads for women’s body enhancement, postage stamps, personal loan ads on TV, luxury residences, and digital photos of Hong Kong women on Facebook. Besides sophisticated analyses of the social semiotics of discourse, these multimodal studies also offer a unique view of the complex contemporary life styles in Hong Kong, often combining Western and Eastern norms and values.”

—Professor Teun A. van Dijk, *Department of Translation and Language Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, Spain*, and Editor of *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse & Communication* and *Discourse Studies*

“This book makes a striking contribution combining Kress and van Leeuwen’s social semiotic analysis with extensive and fascinating in-depth historical research to bring insights into a range of print and digital media showing how multimodality can be fruitfully adapted with the sensitivity to non Western media.”

—Professor David Machin, *Department of Media and Communication, Örebro University, Sweden*

“*Multimodal Communication*, a semiotic analysis of Hong Kong’s everyday life, includes body images, digital photos, social and cultural phenomena evident on social media, and the branding and advertising of luxurious products. This multi-layered view introduces new perspectives to advance understanding of how the personal and cultural identities of the people of Hong Kong are being constructed and mediated in the postcolonial period.”

—Professor Anthony Fung, *School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong*, and *School of Arts and Communication, Beijing Normal University*

May Wong

Multimodal Communication

A social semiotic approach to text and image in
print and digital media

palgrave
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Dedicated to my beloved husband, Arthur Lo, who has married me for ten years (and counting) and has been exceptionally patient and supportive during the writing of this book

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I first dabbled in social semiotics when I was a doctoral student at Lancaster University (UK) and I was completely mesmerised (and I still am) by van Leeuwen's (2005) *Introducing social semiotics* (Routledge) that I stumbled upon in the university bookstore back in 2005. I wrote a short paper on analysing a magazine advertisement on Dove's *Campaign on Real Beauty* and shamelessly submitted it to my supervisor for perusal! 'Very interesting paper! Nice try, May,' said Professor Tony McEnery, a world-renowned corpus linguist. I am still very much indebted to him for his kindness and encouragement.

Ever since that very first attempt of a visual analysis, I have been sharing my thoughts on semiotics with my husband, Arthur, who, as a senior lecturer in interior design, has explored the semiotics of space in his MA dissertation. I am very thankful to him for many long talks on the topics and I cannot possibly express how grateful I am for his love and care for me. Special thanks go to Dr Lillian Yip, my medical doctor, for making every day of my life so much better.

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