In this chapter I explain the features of the discourse of commercialization that emerged from the analysis of the brochures. The first section of the chapter identifies the brochures as examples of the discourse of advertising and summarizes how the analysis drew on Halliday’s (1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) systemic functional linguistics to investigate evidence of interdiscursive links between the discourse instantiated in the brochures and the experiences reported by teachers in the diaries. As explained in Chapter 2, I anticipated that such evidence would support the notion that the discourse(s) associated with teachers’ practices are being colonized in Fairclough’s (1992) sense by the discourse instantiated in the brochures. The following sections explain the evidence for these interdiscursive relations and their construction of the relations between teachers, students and managers as inherently conflicted ‘communities of consumption’.

Analysing the brochures

The brochures, the discourse of advertising and consumer culture

Brochures gathered as data were representative of those which promote organizations in the sector, being designed to persuade members of target groups in particular markets to convert to the role of students. They comprise between four and eight A4 pages, and 1000–2000 words of text arranged in columns, divided into sections, and interspersed with full-colour pictures of the college, its location, facilities and images of students using college facilities, and interacting with each other and with members of the organizations in classes and at locations in the surrounding area. The brochures instantiate what Cook (2001)
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has called the discourse of advertising. This is a discourse which tends to defy categorization, not least because producers continually manipulate advertising discourse itself in the attempt to woo clients.

The economic and cultural significance of advertising in contemporary society is well attested (Featherstone, 2007), and it is this central role combined with its reflexive focus on discourse which has led Fairclough (1992) to identify advertising as an exemplar of strategically motivated discourse and a discourse technology that is implicated in the colonization of other discourses through processes of marketization. In a comprehensive study of the social significance of advertising, Leiss et al. (1997, 2005) explain that the strategic, reflexive nature of advertising arises because it is the primary means by which the market orients individuals’ attempts to satisfy their needs towards consuming goods and services – a role which puts advertising at the heart of the struggle between the interests of producers and consumers, identified by Abercrombie (1990) as characteristic of consumer culture. The centrality of advertising in social life has evolved in tandem with the emergence of this culture, based on the frenetic production and consumption of new products, to the point where

advertising’s role within relations of production and consumption forged in the mediated marketplace should be seen as not only economic, but cultural as well…. Advertising is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving some merchandise of the store shelves, but is rather an integral part of modern culture. Its creations appropriate and transform a vast range of symbols and ideas; its unsurpassed communicative powers recycle cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions. This venture is unified by the discourse through and about objects, which bonds together images of persons, products and wellbeing.

(Leiss et al., 2005, p. 5)

Advertising is self-consciously strategic because it seeks continuously to realign the attitudes of consumers with the interests of producers and thereby minimize the ongoing challenge that misalignment presents to the sale of new products. To achieve this, advertising discourse reconstructs the relationship between producers, products and potential consumers such that consumers come to desire an identity which can be attained by consumption of the advertised products (Wernick, 1991). This reconstruction is not a matter of informing potential consumers of the utility of products and how to acquire them, nor of