

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This review of literature discusses the theories of identity; discursive construction of identity; approaches to the study of identity; approaches of critical discourse analysis through which construction of identity can be studied; and the phenomenon of homosexuality in Malaysia. In addition, this chapter looks at some studies that have been carried out in relation to the Malay identity. Though the studies that are mentioned may not be directly related to this study, it is useful to see whether the findings from the narrative of the participants of this study will indicate some kind of parallelism with the findings of the former studies.

2.1 Theories of Identity

In the 1980's, theories of identity branched out from the social psychological perspectives giving rise to various different theories such as Identity Theory (Stryker, 1987) which adopts a sociological approach; Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Relations (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and Self Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987) which both adopt a psychological approach; and a more traditional study of identity through a social cognitive approach (e.g. Linville, 1985), which was popular in North America (in Spencer-Oatey, H, 2007:640). In the meantime, a more integrated approach has been established by researchers such as Abrams and Hogg (1999) and Simon (2004). For the purpose of this

study, the researcher has chosen to investigate the construction of the social identities of the research participants; therefore, the Social Identity Theory will serve as the basis of this study. The following discussion will attempt to explain the Identity Theory and the Social Identity Theory, which will provide some general understanding of the basic concept of identity. It is useful to understand the distinction between these two theories so that the later discussion in the report of this study will be more comprehensible.

Through a sociological approach, self and identity are seen as having a dialectical relationship with society (Stryker, 1980). Society is shaped by the actions of individuals whereby they create groups, organizations, networks, and institutions within the society. Conversely, the self is influenced by the shared language and meanings of these groups, organizations, networks, and institutions that make up the society when assuming a role of other, taking part in social interactions and reflecting upon oneself as an object. Since self emerges out of and mirrors the society, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of self and identities (parts of self), it is important that one understands the society in which the self is acting, which is always in a social context with the presence of other selves (Stryker, 1980).

Through the perspective of social psychology, the self is viewed in relation to the mind and the social structure. Similar to the sociological approach to self and identity discussed above, the self is claimed to constitute social structure and cyclically, social structure constitutes self. The self emerges out of the mind which arises and develops out of social interactions from which patterned social interactions are derived. These patterned social interactions in turn form the basis of social structure (Mead, 1934). The mind does the

thinking work for the self in determining and indicating meanings to itself and to others through language which encapsulates these meanings in the form of symbols. Self takes on the form of an object and it can reflect upon itself based on these symbols. Therefore self is reflexive in nature and capable of evaluating and considering itself, and planning accordingly for future states, to be conscious of its own being. Due to this characteristic, humans are considered as a 'processual entity' – they consistently formulate and reflect (Stets and Burke, 2003).

Having discussed briefly the core understanding of the sociological and social psychological approach to self and identity – multiple parts of self, for a basis of examining the identity/identities of an individual, it is important to discuss the basic theories which were derived from these two approaches, namely the Identity Theory by Stryker (1980) and the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1986).

2.1.1 Social Identity Theory (Group-based)

As previously discussed, both Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory regard self as “reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications” (Stets and Burke, 2000:226). In social identity theory, this process of categorizing, classifying and naming itself is referred to as 'self-categorization' (Turner et al., 1987); while in identity theory, this process is termed as 'identification' (McCall and Simon, 1978). It is through the process of self-categorization or identification that an identity is constructed.

Social identity theory professes that an individual has a sense of belonging to certain social category or group. The knowledge that an individual retains that he/she belongs to a certain social category or group communicates his/her social identity (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Social group is made up of individuals who share the same social identification and see themselves as members of the same social category. Through social comparison process, the in-group and the out-group are formed. Those who are similar to the self are classified as belonging to the in-group and those who are different from the self are considered as members of the out-group.

The formation of social identity involves two processes which are termed as self-categorization and social comparison. Each of these processes brings about different results (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Self-categorization results in an “accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and other in-group members, and an accentuation of the perceived differences between the self and out-group members” (Stets and Burke, 2000:227). These similarities and differences are noted in terms of attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions, behaviors, styles of speech, styles of clothing, and other qualities that are regarded as belonging to the respective group categorization. Meanwhile, the social comparison is a process whereby the self evaluates and makes judgment onto the in-group and the out-group. This process results in the self selecting specific symbols with which to enhance itself. Self evaluates the in-group and the out-group in the aspects that will cause the in-group to be judged positively and the out-group to be judged negatively in order to enhance its self-esteem. Social categories, which exist in relation to other contrasting categories, eventually make up a structured society, for examples, black verses white, immigrant verses citizen, homosexual verses heterosexual; with each category having

different levels of power, prestige, rights, and status in the society (Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

In social identity which is group-based, the members of the group show uniformity in a number of ways (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994), which can be categorized in terms of cognitive, attitude, and behaviors. In the cognitive category, social stereotyping of both the in-group and the out-group are intensified and made obvious by the consistency and invariable identification with the in-group. Other research has found compelling evidence that being part of the in-group encourages the self to view itself as a prototype member of the group (Hogg and Hardie, 1992). This in-group uniformity is stronger when there is no motivational pressure to differentiate the self from other members in the group (Brewer, 1993; Simon, Pantaleo, and Mummendey, 1995).

In the attitude category, individuals generally have positive opinions of a group, when they themselves become members of that group, and often form strong bonds with the group even though there are no actual direct attachments within the group (Hogg and Hardie, 1992). Other research has discovered that when the self feels that it is part of the group, it becomes more deeply committed to the group and less likely to leave the group, even if the group is unpopular or has low standing in the society (Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje, 1997).

Meanwhile, in the behavior category, in-group members tend to act the same as other members of the group. It is apparent that in an inferior, low-standing minority group, the members of the group are more likely to take part in the group's lifestyle and practice; to

differentiate themselves from the out-group; and to behave in ways to show their appeal to their group (Ethier and Deaux, 1994; Ullah, 1987).

2.1.2 Identity Theory (Role-based)

Unlike social identity theory which is group-based, identity theory is role-based. In identity theory, one's identity is formed by self-categorization in terms of the roles or positions one takes up which are comparatively constant; and which are also parts of social structure. In the context of social structure, individuals label or categorize one another and themselves as the occupants of roles, such as mother, teacher, wife, etc. This labeling brings up meanings in terms of what are expected out of others' and one's conducts and actions when occupying particular roles (McCall and Simmons, 1978; Stryker 1980). Each role in a structured society has a set of associated meanings and expectations which influence or guide the behavior of the occupants of the role (Burke, 1991; Burke and Reitzes 1981).

Contrary to social identity which is characterized by the uniformity of perception and actions of the members of a group who may not have direct relationship with each other, role identity is characterized by differences in performances of the role occupant and the counter-role occupants who relate to each other in an interaction context or situation. Individuals in an interaction context view themselves as different, each with his/her own interests, responsibilities and resources. For each role to function there must be a match between the individual meanings of occupying a role and the behavior of the occupant of the role when relating to other role occupants who need to maintain different behaviors and

meanings in a given situation. This match involves negotiation – cooperation – between the two parties in determining meanings for each situation and identities involved so that they correspond with each other to provide a situated context for interaction. Role identity emerges when a person takes on self-meanings and expectations that are associated with the role and acts accordingly when interacting with other roles in the group so that these meanings and expectations remain and be preserved with that particular role in a structured society (Thoits and Virshup, 1997). As a group of people interact in a situation, a set of roles are activated and the meanings and expectations vary across the individuals in the roles (Stets and Burke, 2000).

2.1.3 Person Identity

In addition to the group-based identity and the role-based identity, both social identity theory and identity theory talk about person identity. According to social identity theory, person identity is seen as a self-categorization which is unique and distinct from other people. This identity is revealed when an individual acts to achieve his or her own goals and desires instead of acting as a member of a group or category (Stets and Burke, 2000). A person's actions may reveal some features of his or her group's norms which he or she consents and agrees with, and some actions may be based on his or her personal feelings and values. This is when personal identities are added to one's social identities, producing distinctive and unique ways of communicating membership in particular groups (Deaux, 1992).

In identity theory, person identity is conceptualized as a set of meanings, which are attached to the self and maintain the individuality of the self. These meanings may reveal in various roles the self takes up and various situations it is in. Some meanings of role identities may coincide with the meanings of person identities and when this happens, they are said to be in control of one another. However, there are occurrences when they conflict with each other. When this happens, a person may act to disregard the role identities in order to sustain his or her person identities (Stets, 1995).

All the three identities of a person – group-based, role-based, and person identities – can operate simultaneously and influence one another in a situation. These different identities can overlap or they can contradict with one another. The degree of which identity is more salient in a situation depends on individuals' constraints of structural expectations which are tied to their group and role identities; or their own choice of actions through their person identities.

With the understanding of the above concept of self-identity, this present study attempts to explore the discursive construction of the social identities of the homosexual participants involved in this study based on the Social Identity Theory which is group-based. However, since the social identity, the role identity and the person identity often operate simultaneously and affect one another, one's social identity cannot really be separated from the other two identities. Anyway, though it seems from the above discussion that identities are constructed and categorized in a simple and clear-cut manner, they actually are not. How identities of individuals are discursively constructed and how they emerge will be clearly explained in the following topic.

2.2 Construction of Identity

As subtly implied throughout the above discussion, identities emerge in interaction through the use of language as social actions. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that the study of identity should be approached through the view that identity is as much a sociocultural phenomenon as it is a linguistic phenomenon “that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in a fixed social categories” (pp. 586). In other words, identity is seen not as a static process but rather a dynamic process that is neither predetermined nor set (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Hall, 1996; Kroskrity, 2000).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) propose five fundamental principles to the study of identities which describe how identities are discursively constructed. They are the emergence principle, the positionality principle, the indexicality principle, the relationality principle, and the partialness principle.

2.2.1 The Emergence Principle

The emergence principle questions the traditional view that identity is resided within the mind of an individual and that the use of language is only to reveal the internal mental state of an individual. Even though individuals’ sense of self is a vital constituent of identity, many researchers, among them Johnston (1996), disclose that only through the use of language in some form of discourse that these self-conceptions penetrate the social world.

The traditional view that accounts identity as located in the mind may overlook the important role of social ground in constructing, maintaining, and altering identity.

The emergence principle stresses that identity is an emergent product. It is not merely a pre-existing provenance of linguistic and other semiotic practices. It is a linguistic phenomenon as much as it is a social and cultural phenomenon. Many approaches to the study of identity proposed by researchers such as Garfinkel (1967); Antaki and Widdicombe (1998); Sidnell (2003); Butler (1990); and Barrett (1999) suggest that identity is not merely a psychological mechanism of self-categorization that is reflected in the individuals' social behaviors; instead identity is something that is composed through social action, principally through language. As identity is emergent, there exists the possibility that resources for identity composition in any certain interaction may develop from resources built up in previous interactions. In other words, these resources “may draw on ‘structure’ – such as ideology, the linguistic system, or the relation between the two” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 588).

The fact that identity is emergent and discursively produced is evident in situations where speakers use language that does not quadrature the social group to which they are conventionally categorized – whether biologically or culturally. This scenario is obvious in studies of transgender and cross-gender performance by Barrett (1999), Besnier (2003), Gaudio (1997), Hall (1997), Hall and O'Donovan (1996), Kulick (1997), and Manalansan (2003). Such studies demonstrate clearly the emergent quality of identity in interactions in which ideologically expected mapping between language and biology or culture were violated and the essentialist preconceptions of linguistic ownership were challenged. For

example, in Hall's study of Hijras' discourse practices in Banaras, India (1997), the participants displayed the identity of neither male nor female even though they were principally born male. Hijras in India were mostly brought up as males before they went to live in one of the many Hijra communities throughout India. Besides dressing up in feminine clothes and acting in feminine mannerism, many Hijras took male partners and chose to "undergo a ritualized castration and penectomy operation" (Hall, 1997: 430). In the Hindi language system, verbal gender marking is often essential to separate the male and female. Using this linguistic resource, these hijras detached themselves from masculinity by referring to themselves using the feminine form even though their family members referred them using the masculine form. However, Hall and O'Donovan (1996) revealed that the use of feminine self-reference by these hijras were not automatic or predetermined but rather alternately used along with masculine self-reference when referring to themselves and other hijras as to create a multiplicity of rhetorical effects. This alternate use of morphological genders by these Hijras was their way of expressing "relations of solidarity and power" (Hall and O'Donovan, 1996: 231). In addition, despite the fact that they dressed and spoke like women, there was an obvious feature of their language use that was distinct from and transgressed the gender norms of proper Indian femininity, which was the use of obscenity in their talk.

2.2.2 The Positionality Principle

The second principle proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) is the positionality principle. This principle rejects the traditional view that identity is merely a set of wide social categories. By merely focusing on the sociological categories, analyst may overlook local

identity categories which are more flexible and nuanced that surface in local contexts. Through ethnography, it has been found that language users do not merely orient to sociological categories but rather more often to local identity categories which offer a superior practical description of linguistic practice.

Besides the macro-level demographic or sociological categories and the local ethnographic cultural categories, Bucholtz and Hall further elaborated that identity also encompasses the micro-level “temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles” (2005: 591). Identity is constructed as an interaction evolves through the momentary roles and orientations assumed by interlocutors in the interaction, such as evaluator, story narrator, joke teller, or involved listener. These interactional roles and positions, like the sociological and the ethnographical identity categories, augment the creation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse. The roles and positions that linguistic users temporarily take on and leave in response to a given situation in a developing interaction, may build up ideological relations with sociological and local cultural categories of identity. Once formed, these ideological relations in turn may influence, but do not determine, how and what is done by whom in an interaction.

The positionality principle is based on the perception that identity is socially constructed at numerous levels. Identities are produced through the relationships one takes up with what they say and how they say it including their evaluative stance; with the person they talk to in face-to-face interaction, with the textual characters represented in the intended content of conversation (through their examination of what one textual character is doing to another); and through his/her relationship to the dominant ideologies, common social

practices, and underlying power structures (Gee, 1996). One of the concerns of positioning is the use of what kind of personal agency is inscribed in interactional social practices. While social and institutional factors can control, restrict and delineate the range of agency for individuals and groups of individuals, groups and individuals on the other hand, can also on their own will, take on an agency that allows them to conform or not conform to the societal norms. These later agentive roles of participants in interactions reveal the ability of individuals to oppose dominant practices, discourses, and master narratives (de Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006).

Positioning can offer a very useful means and a fundamental theoretical construct for analyzing identities. Researchers can examine the linguistic mechanism and the discourse strategies used by speakers in situating themselves in positions of acceptance or rejection of the dominant ideologies of such as race, gender, or the commonly perceived beliefs about family roles and relationships (Bell, 2006; Moita-Lopes, 2006; Wortham and Gadsden, 2006).

Zubair (2007) illustrated a very interesting way in which Pakistani women in his study positioned themselves to the dominant gender ideologies in a patriarchic society in constructing their identities. Using data from recorded focus group discussions which managed to capture the participants' communal as well as individual voices, his study focused on the issue of literacy to examine how the dominant gender ideologies impinge on female literacy. These women used different metaphors to refer to themselves and their surroundings in constructing their identities through their positioning to the dominant gender ideologies and the underlying power structures while talking about literacy,

education and self-image. In his data, Zubair found three types of core metaphors: first, metaphors that connote traditional limitations or restrictions which implies the acceptance of the dominant ideologies by some of these women; second, metaphors that imply shifting and changeable identities; third, metaphors that connote individual aspirations and undermining of traditional identities – the second and third types imply the rejection of the dominant ideologies. Examples of the metaphors found were *domesticate*, *silent birds*, *caged birds* which were used by the older women participants to refer to themselves and their peers; and images of buildings, blocks and bondage such as *cage*, *four walls*, *house* et cetera, which were used by participants of all ages, groups and educational backgrounds, all to signify their feelings of constraints and restrictions. Among other metaphors found was *English is my love, my passion, my retreat*. Drawing upon analysis of Radway's (1987) research, Zubair interpreted that these metaphors – *my love, my passion, my retreat* – suggested a sense of withdrawal from the dominant discourses and resistance to the system and ideology of patriarchy.

2.2.3 The Indexicality Principle

Going back to Bucholtz and Hall's principles in studying identity construction, the third one is the indexicality principle. Indexicality principle as presented by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) is very much related to the positionality principle. They view the positionality aspect as more of an ontological characteristic of identities while the indexicality is concerned with the mechanism by which linguistic forms are utilized to construct identity positions. Basically, index is a linguistic form whose meaning relies on the interactional contexts and in a more general viewpoint; indexicality is a process involving the formation

of the semiotic relationship between linguistic forms and social meanings (Ochs, 1992). This semiotic relationship relies very much on the cultural values and beliefs, or in other words, ideologies about who can produce what sorts of language in creating particular identities.

As defined by this indexicality principle, identity is discursively constructed through a variety of linguistic means:

Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity positions; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups (Hall and Bulcholtz, 2005: 594).

According to both Hall and Bulcholtz, the labeling and referential categorizing of identities are the most apparent means of forming identities through talk. This labeling or referencing which places one category in comparison or in contrast to other categories; and the associated qualities that come with it revealed in terms of predicates and modifiers in an ongoing discourse, offers very important data in identity construction. For example, in Hall's study of Hijras' discourse practices in India (1997) mentioned earlier, one of the participants, Sulekha cited her family's condemnation of her by referring to her with the term 'hijra' which holds a tremendous disparaging implication to a non-hijra Indian society. 'Hijra' means impotent and ideologically in normative Indian family structures, this is the biggest insult, and due to this fact that her parents lamented that she should have just died rather than to bring great shame to the family.

Another linguistic means of discursively constructing identities is through the indirect pragmatic process of implicature and presupposition regarding one's own or others' identity positions. An individual may use implicature to display identities to accomplish a certain particular interactional purpose or goal. For example, Liang (1999) contended that lesbians and gay men will, in certain situations in which they do not want to openly display their identities in fear of reprisal from the members of the out-group, use implicature such as gender reference to lovers which is non-aligned to any specific gender. In such a way, they are understood by the in-group members and at the same time avoid hostility from the out-group members. In the same way, presupposition is also an indirect strategy for positioning oneself and others in a discourse to fulfill a certain purpose. For example, in Ehrlich's (2001) analysis of tribunal hearings of a college rape, the defense attorney manipulated presuppositions to position the raped victim as a willing participant instead of a victim. In the defense's argument through presuppositions of alleged victim's actions, the victim was made to appear as a powerful agent and was in control of the situation – it was her choice to allow the incident to take place.

Displayed evaluative, affective and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk which are collectively termed as stance, as well as interactional footings and participant roles can be good resources for identity construction. As proposed by Du Bois (2002), stance is a social action whereby we evaluate something, and thus position ourselves in alignment or disalignment to others. In interactions, people constantly position themselves and others as specific types of people. As mentioned earlier, Ochs (1992) conceptualized indexicality as the process involving the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings; and she later further elaborated that these indexical connections are not direct

but rather are very much determined by interactional stances, which subsequently are associated with specific social categories, such as gender (Ochs, 1993).

Linguistic style and language choice, which are repertoires of linguistic forms ideologically associated with specific personas and groups, can also index identity. Members of a group can display homogeneous identity by using similar style in terms of the linguistic structures which include grammar, phonology, and lexis in their linguistic performance. Similarly, the language or dialect choice can also be indexically linked to identity categories. This fact has been discussed in the literature on language, nationalism, and ideology (by Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin et al., 1998) and more recently in the work on language and globalization (e.g. Besnier, 2004; Hall, 2003). For example, in Besnier's (2004) study on how globalization shapes identity in interaction, which he carried out in Tonga, the preference use of English by his subjects over their Tongan language constructed them as modern and cosmopolitan.

2.2.4 The Relationality Principle

Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) fourth principle is the relationality principle which stresses that identity is a relational phenomenon. This principle emphasizes that identities only subsist in relation to other identity positions and other social actors; and they are concerned with more than just the aspects of sameness and differences as proposed by the social identity theory advocated by Tajfel and Turner (1986), as previously discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Bucholtz and Hall feel that this view was too simplified and thus elaborated that identity processes involve a much wider scope of relations. They propose that the

relations through which identities are intersubjectively constructed are several in numbers, often overlapping and complementary with each other. These relations include similarity/differences, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy.

To break away from the very basic traditional view of identity relations, Hall and Bucholtz termed the similarity and difference relations as *adequation* and *distinction*. Under adequation relations, groups or persons need not be actually identical to be positioned as alike, but simply they must be presented to be as sufficiently similar to serve particular interactional intents. Any similarities that are perceived as significant and helpful for the adequation of two groups or people will be foregrounded and any differences that can interfere with or prevent the adequation will be downplayed. For example, Sulekha in Hall's (1997) study on Hijras, used feminine gender marking not to position herself as a woman but rather just to achieve sufficient hints of femininity to construct herself as a hijra. Another slightly different example is the strategy of adequation that is creatively exploited to achieve particular intent by President George W. Bush in his speech in Cincinnati in 2002. In Adam Hodges' (n.d.) unpublished critical discourse analysis of the president's speech, he established that Bush's continual concurrent use of the names Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein discursively create the adequation between the two entities for the purpose of convincing the people of the whole nation the justification and the need to attack Iraq.

The next set of relations is genuineness and artifice, also termed as authentication and denaturalization by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). They are concerned with the linguistic strategies of the speakers in an interaction by which they assert their identities as real or

otherwise. While both relations are associated to authenticity, each is concerned with contrasting aspects of identity formation. Authentication focuses on the means of linguistic strategies through which identities are discursively verified while denaturalization focuses on the ways in which identities that seem real through assumptions are actually crafted, fragmented, or false. Authenticity, according to Bulcholtz and Hall, is not an element which is inherent by nature but rather a process which is played by social actors in discourse to achieve certain purposes. Authentication concentrates on the kind of language and language users displayed in an interaction that can be considered as genuine for a particular purpose. Ordinarily, genuineness is achieved by displaying one's historical link to an acclaimed past. On the other hand, denaturalization is concerned with the way in which a claimed identity is undermined. Denaturalization often occurs in most presentations of hybrid identity and parodic performances (e.g. Bucholtz, 1995; Jaffe, 2000; Woolard, 1998) as well as in cases in which displayed identity infringe ideological expectations (e.g. Barrett, 1999; Rampton, 1995).

The third and final set of relations is authorization and illegitimation. These intersubjective relations take into account the structural and institutional aspects of identity construction. Authorization is an act of using the structures of institutionalized power and ideology in affirming and imposing certain identities. On the contrary, illegitimation is a social act of the same structures in rejecting and dismissing certain identities. This kind of act is clearly seen in the speech of President George W. Bush in Cincinnati in 2002 (in Adam Hodges' (n.d.) unpublished critical discourse analysis of the president's speech). Bush's use of first-person plural pronoun was deliberate to evoke a sense of oneness

between his administration and the United States as a whole. In invoking a shared national identity of all the American people, Bush used 'our country' at the beginning of his speech but later used the same pronoun to refer to specific information only known to his members of administration. At the end of his speech, Bush used 'our responsibilities' to impose on all the American people that they were one and had to act together. This imposition was made possible by the power Bush held as the president of the United States that enabled him to metonymically position himself as representing the voice of the entire nation.

This type of relations involved in discursive construction of identity is not only restricted to power structures. There are many cases in which structures of authority may not be present but ideological structures contribute to identity formation. This process is called hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

2.2.5 The Partialness Principle

The fifth and final principle is the partialness principle. This principle proposes that identity is not internally fixed and it surpasses beyond the individual self. Identities are created in contexts and therefore can be partials of several elements. As noted by Bucholtz and Hall,

Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts (2005: 606).

It is necessary to note that this principle raises a question as to what extent the role of agency plays in the construction of identities. Construction of identity as being described above brings the understanding that the agency has, to a certain extent, the capability to deliberately compose his/her identities (e.g. the use of feminine pronoun by the Hijras to construct their identities as such individuals); however, he/she is still constrained by ideological and material structures. On one side, large-scale social structures can only emerge through discursive interactions, and on the other side, interactions are affected by ideological and material constructs that fabricate relations of power. Hence in the expression of identities – both at micro and macro levels, structure and agency are intertwined together in the process.

Bulcholtz and Hall's (2005) commentary offers a sociocultural linguistic approach to the study of identities which was based on several fields such as speech accommodation theory by Giles et al. (1991) and social identity theory by Meyerhoff and Neidzielski (1994) and Tajfel and Turner (1979) in social psychology; theories of language ideology by Irvine and Gal (2000) and Silverstein (1979) and indexicality by Ochs (1992) and Silverstein (1976, 1985) in linguistic anthropology; and theories of style by Eckert and Rickford (2001) and Mendoza-Denton (2002) and models of identity by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) in sociolinguistics. Sociocultural linguistics offers a broad interdisciplinary perspective on the intersection of language, culture and society. In their approach, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) thoroughly describe how identities are discursively constituted in linguistic interactions and deeply stress that analyzing identities is a centrally linguistic phenomenon. The sociocultural linguistic encompasses several disciplinary subfields such as sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, socially oriented forms of discourse analysis – conversation and

critical discourse analysis, and linguistically oriented social psychology which all provide toolkits for analyzing identity construction. This present study has chosen the critical discourse analysis framework, in particular Wodak's Historical-Discourse Analysis, and both will be discussed in the following two sections.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is one of the disciplines which study and analyze discourse, whether written or spoken, among many diverse fields such as pragmatics, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetoric, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography, and media analysis. It is principally concerned with the way in which power abuse, dominance, and inequality are discursively performed and practiced, legitimized, and contested in social or political discourses – texts or talks (van Dijk, 2001). In CDA, texts are seen as sites of struggle wherein they demonstrate vestiges of conflicting discourses and ideologies competing and struggling for power (Wodak, 2006). What makes CDA different from the other fields in analytical research is how it rejects the traditional 'value-free' science and promotes the point of view that discourse scholars have social obligation to understand, expose, and in due course resist social inequality. Van Dijk (1986) suggested that critical science should go beyond surface explanation or application and inquire further into the aspects of duties, responsibility, interests, wellbeing, and ideology. Critical science should not limit itself solely on academic issues but should disclose prevailing social problems through the viewpoint of the marginalized, and critically analyzes the party in power who is responsible for the problems; and those who can solve the problems. Van Dijk even went as far as to say that CDA is the 'study and critique of

social inequality' (van Dijk, 1993: 249) and that the critical discourse analysts 'must be activists' (van Dijk, 1993: 253).

The word 'critical' in CDA gives the implication that it allows no restriction in the evaluation of the texts and the contexts being studied. This 'critical' approach to the analysis of texts has developed from the influence of Marxism (van Dijk, 1993). Derived from the Marxism principles, Hammersley (2002: 244) listed the assumptions that the term 'critical' in general refers to the ideas:

1. that we can only understand society as a totality, that any particular phenomenon must be analyzed against the background of its wider social contexts;
2. that by producing knowledge of society, critical research reveals what is obscured by ideology, such ideology being seen as pervasive and as playing an essential role in preserving the status quo;
3. that a critical approach not only produces knowledge which enables us to understand how society is but also how it *can* and *ought to be*;
4. that by acting on the basis of critical theory we can change the world for the better;
5. that the change produced will be fundamental in character, such as to eradicate oppression and emancipate all human beings.

As implied by van Dijk (1993) and Hammersley (2002) above, CDA calls for the researchers in this field to take up a very big responsibility to change and correct what is wrong in the society. However, Wodak took on a slightly different view on CDA:

"... in contrast to some views on CDA, CDA is not concerned with evaluating what is 'right' or 'wrong'. CDA – in my view – should try to make choices at each point in the research itself, and should make this choice transparent. It should also justify theoretically why certain interpretations of discursive events seem more valid than others" (Wodak, 2001: 65).

Based on Wodak's perspective on CDA, the researcher of this present study would like to stress that her purpose is not to condemn or condone homosexuality or dictate to what is

right and what is wrong but rather to investigate, explore and disclose the discursive construction of identities of her homosexual research participants in their dilemmas living in a heterosexual-dominated society. What this researcher is trying to put forth is that there is a social problem with regards to this issue; and the researcher hopes that this research can contribute resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and resolving this problem.

Now that the researcher's intention has been made clear, let us look at the principles of CDA. The major principle of CDA is that it perceives 'language as social practice' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) and the context in which the language is used is critical in interpreting and understanding a discourse (Wodak, 2000).

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it. The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258)

Looking closely at the principle of CDA in terms of how identity is constructed as proposed by both these critical discourse analysts above, it is very much in line with the sociological approach to self and identity raised at the beginning of this chapter (page 12) – identity work is a discursive practice, which is constituted by discourse that influences society and is influenced by the society. This is not unexpected as CDA is a disciplinary

sub-field of the larger sociocultural linguistic approach. It is also oriented to the social-philosophical approach in its outlook (Hammersley, 2002). In fact, CDA is known for being “transdisciplinary” (Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999); “multidisciplinary” (van Dijk, 1998, 2001a), and “interdisciplinary” (Wodak et al., 1999). Due to this, a number of frameworks to the study of discourse have flourished since the 1990’s, amongst which are the lexicogrammatical approach by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999); the socio-cognitive approach by van Dijk (1999); the multi-model discourse analysis by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001); and the discourse-historical approach by Wodak (2001) which takes on the perspective of sociolinguistics and text linguistics (Wodak et al., 1999).

Even though CDA is not uniform in the approaches and methodologies it applies in analyzing discourses, critical discourse analysts share mutual principles in view to theorization. From the work of Fairclough and Wodak (1997), van Dijk (2001:253) summarized the common basis of CDA as follows:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems
- 2) Power relations are discursive
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture
- 4) Discourse does ideological work
- 5) Discourse is historical
- 6) The link between text and society is mediated
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory
- 8) Discourse is a form of social action

CDA incorporates the insight of several theories such as the theory of “social critique” by the Frankfurt School; the “communication-based” version of critical theory by Habermas (1984-1987); the concept of “discursive formation” (1991) and “power/knowledge” (1980) by Foucault; and the concept of “Intertextuality” by Kristeva (1996) into the social sciences. For example, Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) chose to link critical social science theories with systematic functional grammar while van Dijk (1999) integrated the ideas of cognitive psychology. Wodak (2001), on the other hand, chose to include ideas of Bernstein’s sociolinguistic approach along with the ideas of the Frankfurt School Critical Theory. In the meantime, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) chose to integrate functional grammar by Halliday (1978) with semiotics.

CDA aims to integrate the micro-level and macro-level of analysis of discourse. Language use, verbal interaction, and communication form the micro-level of analysis, while power, dominance, ideology, and inequality contributes to the macro-level of analysis. In a CDA work, the analysts assert to interpret and explain a discourse both at the micro- and macro-level for only this way can they achieve a unified whole of analysis of any given discourse (van Dijk, 2001). Parallel to van Dijk’s stance, Fairclough and Kress (1993) stressed that CDA focuses not only on texts (spoken or written) in its investigation but also the social processes and structures that contribute to the production of a text and within which persons or groups as “social-historical subjects” form meanings in their interaction with the text in order to achieve a fully “critical” explanation of a discourse.

One of the common topics of study that adopt CDA framework is the construction of identities. As CDA is a disciplinary subfield encompassed in sociocultural linguistics as

discussed in the previous section, many of its perspectives on identity construction are parallel to the principles of identity studies advocated by Bulcholtz and Hall (2005) discussed earlier. The most obvious and distinct tenet of CDA is that discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies and these relations constructively affect social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief of the participants in the discourse.

2.4 The Discourse-Historical Approach

The discourse-historical (DH) approach to CDA has been developed by Wodak (2001) and Wodak et al., (1999). This approach was intended by Wodak and associates to enable analysts to explain the struggles and contradictions which describe the modern societies which are becoming more and more complex. Therefore in order to demystify the contradictions and conflicts there is a need for an approach that takes into account the multicausal influences that affect the relationships of groups of people within a society and between different societies. To be able to do this, an interdisciplinary approach to a research is needed. The research need not focus only on the discursive practices but a broad variety of materials and semiotic practices as well. Therefore it is important that the research be “multitheoretical and multimethodical, critical and self-reflective” (Wodak, 2001).

As common to the basis of CDA, DH is socio-philosophical-oriented in its approach. It incorporates three interrelated positions of which two are related to the aspect of cognition and one related to the aspect of action. First, its work intends to uncover the conflicts and

dilemmas that are present explicitly or implicitly in the internal structures of the discourse or text being analyzed. Second, it aims at making clear the manipulative or persuasive feature of the discursive practices. In doing this, the analyst need to look beyond the discourse or text internal realm and analyze the structures in connection to the social and political relations, processes and situations that embedded the discursive practice. Third, the work of DH intends to change and improve communication between people, groups of people within and between societies.

As mentioned earlier, Wodak prefers to view CDA as not concerned with assessing what is right or wrong, but is concerned with interpreting the discursive events as justifiably as possible. One way of avoiding or minimizing the risk of biasness, DH proposes that any analysis should adhere to the principle of triangulation. Accordingly, a research following a DH approach should employ multiple approaches, multimethodologies; and incorporate a wide variety of empirical data and background information, including description of the sociopolitical and historical contexts in which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (Wodak et al., 1999). In order to really understand how the participants of this research perceived themselves and others; and constructed their identities, it is important to first understand the society in which the discursive event took place.

As illustrated in the quotation on page 34, Wodak shares the same view with Fairclough that language use whether spoken or written, which makes up a discourse, is a form of social practice. Both these critical discourse analysts proclaim that there is a dialectical relationship between discursive practices and the specific “field of actions”, which encompasses situations, institutional frames and social structures, surrounding the

discursive practices (Wodak, 2001: 66). The discursive practices and the field of actions reciprocally constitute one another.

The important terms in DH are ‘frames’, ‘schemata’, ‘script’, ‘plan’, ‘fields of actions’, ‘symptomatology’ and ‘conceptual pragmatism’ (Wodak, 2001; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Titscher et al., 2000). These analysts believe that individual’s social situational background plays a role in developing certain attitudes and outlooks on reality of that particular individual. As suggested by Titscher et al. (2000), an array of social-psychological factors provides a member of a society with ‘frames’ and ‘schemata’ to construct and perceive reality. “Fields of actions” which make up a particular societal ‘reality’ contribute to forming and shaping the ‘frame’ of discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: 383). A discourse about a particular topic may start in one field of action and continue to another field of action. Discourses can further extend and cross to other fields of actions and discourses; they can overlap; and are interrelated to one another. This scenario reflects how interdiscursively a society can be constituted.

This present study will explore how the social structures and institution frames which envelop the discursive acts of its participants influence their narrations of their life stories and in their construction of their identities. This study attempts to uncover how the ‘frames’ and the ‘schemata’; and the ideologies of the society affects how the samples of this study perceive the reality and position themselves towards the mainstream sexual ideology.

The discourse-historical CDA approach was first developed specifically to study discourses of discrimination. The analysis, on one hand, attempted to disclose linguistic manifestation of prejudice in discourses which were embedded in linguistic and social contexts. On the other hand, the interpretation of the data was contrasted with the historical knowledge of the same topic. This approach was later extended to the study of racist discrimination and identity construction, specifically national identity (Wodak et al., 1999). The latter studies aimed to uncover how group sameness and differences were discursively constructed to result in the political and social exclusion of particular out-groups. As this study concerns the construction of the identity of this present research participants who are from the minority group – homosexuals – discourse-historical CDA approach is deemed suitable and appropriate to serve as the theoretical framework of this study.

2.5 Homosexuality in Malaysia

In order to understand the discursive construction of identity among Malay homosexuals in Malaysia, one first needs to understand the current data as well as a brief historical background of Malays and Malaysia in relation to this issue.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country with a total population of 28,250,500. According to the statistics provided by the Malaysian Statistic Department, in year 2010 (see Appendix A) the population comprises about 91 percent citizens and 9 percent non-citizens. The Malaysian citizens are made up of 60 percent bumiputeras (Malays and other indigenous groups), 22.8 percent Chinese, 6.8 percent Indians and 1.3 percent others. Out of the 60

percent bumiputeras, the Malays make up 49.6 percent. Obviously, the Malays make up the largest part of the population.

A “Malay”, as defined by the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, is “a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language [and], conforms to Malay customs’ (The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 160: 2). There has been a lot of research done on Malay identities which gives rise to several definitions or notions of essentialized Malay but these definitions or notions do not differ very much from each other. Among these notions is that the Malays are those who speak the Malay language, are loyal to the king/sultan, and uphold the religion of Islam (Shamsul, 1999). Meanwhile, Ismail Noor and Muhammad Azaham (2000) identified Malays as ‘practicing Muslims’ who are ‘residing’ in Malaysia. Similarly, Shukor Omar (2003), even though he did not specifically define ‘Malay’, claimed that Malay customs (*adat resam*) are mainly derived from the teachings of Islam. The identity of the Malays has always been linked to the religion of Islam.

The attempts to essentialize the Malay identity can be seen as far back to the time after Malaysia achieved its independence (1957), as can be seen in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 160: 2. More than a decade after achieving independence, the Malays found themselves far behind the Chinese in economic status. Due to the socio-economic imbalances among these ethnic groups, a racial riot occurred between the Chinese and the Malays in 1969. Because of this clash between the Chinese and the Malays, the Malays felt the need to claim the land, *Tanah Melayu* and adopt the doctrine, *Ketuanan Melayu* (Mahathir, 1970). As a result, the New Economic Policy implemented in 1971 was

tailored to build Malaysia as a nation as well as make provisions for the Malays to move forward in all economic sectors and to better achieve economic equality with the other ethnic groups (Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department retrieved in 2010 at <http://www.epu.jpm.my>). Since then, some of the Malay political leaders have come up with a few more notions of the Malay identity. Amongst these notions is a political constructed concept of the Malays as *Melayu Baru* articulated by Muhammad bin Muhammad Taib. Muhammad Muhammad Taib felt that this concept would better empower the Malays in their struggle in the era of globalization (Muhammad Muhammad Taib, 1996). He visualized the Malays as follows:

The New Malay knows clearly who he is (identity), where he is going (vision) wherever he may be (level and role); is highly acceptable; is a leader who brings about changes in the technology or thinking of his people and who places his religion of Islam as the foundation in all aspects (1996: 13).

Still, this concept does not exclude the place of religion in the identity of the Malays. Other notions of the Malays coined by Malay political leaders include *Islam Hadhari* by Abdullah Badawi in 2004 and *Melayu Global* by Najib in 2005 (Khan, 2006). These new notions of the Malay identity are all prescribed identity constructed by political leaders in their vision to promote the Malays as a developed race.

Malaysia is a developing country which has gone through tremendous economic growth. Globalization is the “in-thing” in Malaysia today and has been for many years. Nearly every sector, including economics, education, and technology are being targeted for globalization. Like other developing countries, China and Turkey for example, globalization introduces Malaysians to new ideologies which in turn lead to new identities. As Parker (1999: 223) indicated in a dissimilar context, the changes in the way people

socially organize themselves are the outcome of a complex interaction of ‘individual biographies, local social structures, and broader global processes’. Like many other societies in the world, this scenario has also affected the identity formation of the Malays in Malaysia.

Malaysia is not an exception to the change of economic systems from agrarian to capitalist. As in other parts of the world, this shift of economic systems has inevitably impacted family formation; gender systems in terms of man and woman roles in society; and the movement of populations from rural areas to metropolitan areas. The changes in the political economy bring about individualism among the people. As pointed out by Plummer (1995:92), “the notion of an autonomous individual is a crucial idea. It is the rise of the modern self: a self that has to be much more flexible, mutable, and protean than the self in a pre-capitalist order where identities were fixed, stable, and largely God-given”. With globalization and exposure to the outside world, like many other communities in the world, the identities of the Malays have become more complex and cannot be accepted as predetermined and constant. Homosexuality has long existed in the Muslim countries (Kligerman, 2007) and Malaysia may not be an exception, however, homosexual behavior had been carried out behind closed door and it had not been much heard. Globalization and the advancement of the technology provide a channel for homosexuals to easily adopt the homosexual lifestyle. Homosexuality is no longer a shocking phenomenon. Homosexuals are now bolder in exhibiting their activities as can be seen through their websites, chat rooms, online profiles, dating services, and blogs where many young Malay and also non-Malay men communicate their “diverse sexual choice and desire” (Jerome, 2008: 37). As Dennis Altman pointed out:

The significant aspect of the contemporary globalization of capitalism is the growth of affluence in many countries and the corresponding greater freedom for individual choice it makes possible. Affluence, education, and awareness of other possibilities are all prerequisite for the adoption of new forms of identity, and the spread of these conditions will increase the extent to which gay identities develop beyond their base in liberal Western societies. (Altman, 1996: 87-8)

Homosexuality is generally perceived as a transgression and a social deviance of traditional socio-cultural and religious values. Malay sexuality is mediated through the establishment of these values. Relations between men and women are expected to be confined to what is right and wrong; through “the external control” and “internal form of moral-self-control” (Shamsul and Fauzi, 2006: 160). Former Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir once prescribed that it was only through good moral values that the Malays could become “good citizens” and that traditional Malay customs and religion were fundamental to the formation of the Malay identity (Hooker, 2004). As homosexual conduct and lifestyles are considered a social deviance and a violation of the cultural and religious values, norms, and boundaries of Malay male (hetero)sexuality, there are negative consequences for those who defy the norms. Homosexuality is regarded as a crime in Malaysia. According to the Malaysian Penal Code Section 377A and 377B, whoever commits sodomy or carnal intercourse against the law of nature shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to twenty years and shall also be liable to whipping.

2.6 Research on Malay Identity and Malay Homosexuals in Malaysia

Studies to characterize the identity of the Malay have been carried out in Malaysia for quite some time by a number of researchers such as Shamsul (1996, 1998, 2004); Farish

(2003); Reid (2004) and Virginia-Hooker (2004). However, none of these studies specifically followed the notion of Critical Theory which was inspired by the Frankfurt School, whereby the linguistic component is critically analyzed. These studies were conducted following the approaches of either sociology or anthropology. Discourse analytical study, especially CDA, have started to emerge in studies by Malaysian researchers such as Kamila (2004) and Zuraidah (2006) who analyzed discourses of political speeches; and Shakila (2001) who analyzed the construction the political personality in the discourse of news media. However, these studies did not specifically focus on the construction of identity. The only study thus far that has adopted a CDA approach to the study of identity construction specifically Malay identity, is a study done by Khan (2006).

Khan's study aimed at exploring how Malay youth constructed their identity by means of discursive discourse of 'transnational popular culture'. The study focused on how the targeted subjects constructed their identities when interpreting various texts of 'desire' and 'fantasy' which in this case identified as popular culture. Through this study, Khan intended to show how the Malay youth discursively construct a discourse of 'aesthetic preference' in relation to popular culture, such as films, music and television shows, to reflect their identity. As he mentioned in his study, one might dispute over the fact that there is a close correlation between aesthetic preference and ideology which constitutes identity, however, it is not unreasonable to say that an individual's perception and attitude towards any aspect of life is actually influenced by his/her ideology which in turn reflect his/her self identity. As noted in Pêcheux's (1982) work, discourse is the site where

language and ideology meet. When people produce discourse, their discourse as well as they themselves are the effects of their ideological positioning.

In the past discussions about identities of Malaysian or the Malay, the identities have always been constructed through the ideological envisage of nationalism or religion. Most of these identities were intended to construct or reconstruct desired identities of the Malay and the Malaysian which were seen as essential by the politicians in building this country (Khan, 2006), such as Bangsa Malaysia instead of Bangsa Melayu inspired by Mahathir Mohammed and the notion of moderate/progressive Islam instead of extremist/fundamentalist Islam in the discourse of Islam Hadhari or 'civilizational Islam' inspired by Abdullah Badawi. All these notions or concepts are prescribed or 'desired' or 'imagined' identities, and there is a question whether there is really an individual self-identity or everyone in the society admits to the homogeneous socially prescribed identity. Khan (2006) argued that even though a group of individuals are socially situated in a particular society, this does not guarantee a homogeneous community. He further stated that 'social subjects are born in a social system, which is neither 'true' nor 'absolute'; as a result of which the 'reality' constructed by the members of a society mostly manifest that they comprehended the codes of the particular societies that they live in" (Khan, 2006:4-5). This statement implies that not every individual in the society will embrace the same identity. The illusion of 'imagined community' suggested by Anderson (2000) which attempts to construe identity as a hegemonic construction conducted by dominant discourse involving participation of a wider community would be rejected by Bhabha (1994) who stressed that such an attempt would be lacking 'hybridity'. Going back to the basic concept of identity discussed at the beginning of this chapter, apart from the role-

based identity and the social identity, there exists the person identity that gives the power – the role of agency to individuals to maintain or resist status quo and dominant discourse or ideology.

Linking to Lacan's proposition that "subjects are effects of signifiers", Khan maintained his argument that social subjects are exposed to infinite signifiers – "chain of signifiers" which contribute to the construction of very complex individual self identities. Thus he agreed with Lacan's suggestion that there is no single layered or one true 'signified' (Lacan, 1998). Signifiers are formed by elements of unconsciousness such as wishes, desires and images which are constantly sliding, shifting and circulating; and individuals, in becoming a 'self', try to stop this chain of signifiers so that the "I" meaning becomes stable. However, this to Lacan, is just an illusion. Based on this argument, Khan carried out his research to explore how the desires and fantasy signifiers – the popular culture – affect his Malay subjects.

Khan has chosen the discourse-historical approach in critical analysis founded by Wodak (2001) and Wodak et al (1999) as the base framework for his study. As his study is concerned with identity construction, it is clearly an appropriate choice. However, Khan's methodology for his study was approached somewhat differently from the normal discourse analysis which is qualitative in nature whereby Khan decided to also use the quantitative tool to gather his data. Since the studies of identity require detailed account of the subjects' 'moments' of articulation 'exposing' their position and ideology, Khan also used participant observation and interviews to collect small corpora on one hand and on another used questionnaires to collect a larger corpora which could be generalized as the

'attitudes' of a bigger social group and to identify a social phenomenon. In analyzing his data, Khan integrated various perspectives in CDA by combining both the macro (which includes discursive domain, orders of discourse, intertextuality, deconstruction, and anti-essentialism) and the micro (which consists of rhetorical analysis and systemic functional grammar) notions of discourse. The methodology used by Khan was appropriate for generalizing the findings to the community of Malay youth. However, since this present study is only concerned with the discursive construction of identities of its four homosexual participants and does not attempt to generalize the findings to all the homosexual community in Malaysia, small corpora is seemed sufficient to achieve its objectives and its data will be analyzed at both the macro and micro level.

The participants of Khan's study were students from the Islamic International University Malaysia and some experts that include Malay intellectuals and socio-economic analysts. Among the participants, thirty students between the ages of 19 and 25 along with twenty-five experts in the field of socio-economy and Malay identity were interviewed while three hundred and fifty other students were given questionnaires to answer. The data gathered from the interview with the experts provided the background information to the analysis of Malay youth identity.

What are significant about Khan's study to this research are his findings. The main findings of Khan's research support the notion that social subjects have autonomy in making individual decision; however, simultaneously this autonomy does not free them from their responsibility as a subject situated in a particular society. Khan's analysis showed how the construction of the Malay youth was negotiated in his subjects'

interpretations of popular cultural texts. These interpretations which form the discourse were very much influenced by the ideologies revered by these subjects. As acknowledged by Crotti (1998: 79),

The *mélange* of cultures and sub-cultures into which we are born provides us with meanings. These meanings we are taught and we learn in a complex and subtle process of enculturation. They establish a tight grip upon us and, by and large, shape our thinking and behaviour throughout our lives.

In creating 'self' and 'other' – the Malay as "us" and the western as "them", the subjects of Khan's study did not completely glorify the "us" and criticize the "them". As Khan put it "the 'other' constructed by the subjects is similar to the notion of 'other' developed by Lacan (2000). It is an 'other' which is an absolute necessary component in the construction of 'self'" (2006: 235). The subjects did not construct the popular culture of the west as all negative or submit to absolute anti-essentialism towards the popular culture and neither did they totally embrace the western perspective. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the notion of Malay is never separated from Islam. Distinctive traits of Islam were obviously reproduced by Khan's subjects in their discourse of popular culture. Their Islamic identity was foregrounded in one way or another during their interpretation of the subject matter. However, all the subjects chosen for his study were International Islamic University students amongst whom almost 90% of the total had undergone prior education in religious schools. Therefore, there may be a question of biasness in the selection of the subjects and a question whether their data could represent the identity of all Malay youth. On the contrary, this present study attempts to explore the identities of four Malay male students in various universities who are homosexuals, ones who may be regarded by many as those who have violated the societal cultural and Islamic values. It is valuable to see whether there are some similarities in the identities that have been constructed by the

participants of this present study with those that had been constructed by Khan's research participants.

Similar to Khan's finding, Teh's (2001) research on the influence of culture and religion on male transsexual identity in Malaysia also disclosed the same findings which demonstrate that Malays in Malaysia, regardless of the lifestyle they chose, were still influenced by their religion in some ways. Teh's research involved 507 male transsexuals from eight states in Malaysia where most of them were residing. The majority of transsexuals in Malaysia were Malays and Muslims. Out of the total number of Teh's research participants, 86% were Malays and 88% were Muslims. Teh's study did not follow the notion of the Critical Theory, but followed the approach of sociology and anthropology. Therefore, its focus of analysis was not on the linguistic components of the participants' responses but rather on the content of the subject matter discussed or questioned. The study involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires consisted of 142 questions which could be divided into three sections: 1) the social aspect; 2) HIV/AIDS knowledge; and 3) related health issues. The questions under the social aspect of the questionnaires were adapted from studies carried out in the west. Besides the questionnaires, some of the transsexuals and relevant authorities were also interviewed to get more comprehensive data.

Like homosexuals, transsexuals are also considered as sexual deviants in Malaysia and therefore are normally rejected by the public. Generally, transsexuals desire to be the opposite gender in every aspect. Though transsexuals can be males or females, the term 'transsexual' in Malaysia is usually referred to male transsexuals (Teh, 2001). This term is

used by the transsexual community in Malaysia because many of them have the ultimate desire to undergo sex change operations so that they can lead their lives as females. The transsexuals are also locally called “Mak Nyahs” – a term which generally refers to men who are effeminate. Transsexuals whether they finally undergo sex change operations or not, they are normally sexually attracted to and take up male partners; and, for that reason, they could be also be classified as homosexuals (Teh, 2001).

The main aim of Teh’s research was to prove that even though transsexuals in Malaysia had similar characteristics to those in other parts of the world, there is a difference in that they were influenced by their culture and religion. From the research, Teh discovered a number of findings that are worth mentioning and significant to this present study. Most of the participants in Teh’s study came from large families – more than three children – consisting of both male and female. The general perception of the Malaysian public that individuals became transsexuals due to the lack of male role models in their families was not true as these respondents claimed that they were not influenced by their female family members. In addition, most of the respondents came from relatively happy families and only a small percentage were raised in families with problems. Ninety-five percent of the respondents expressed that they were happy as transsexuals even though they might be shunned by their family members and the society. Among the findings, the main discovery was that most of the Muslim transsexuals, regardless of how much they wanted to be females, would not undergo a sex change operation, as this is strongly prohibited by Islam. Some of the older transsexuals had gone back to wearing male clothing even though they had been wearing women’s clothing most of their lives, because they feared that they would not be buried as males when they die and therefore would not be accepted by God.

Although Muslim transsexuals share common characteristics with transsexuals in other parts of the world, some parts of their lives were, to a certain extent, still affected by their religion.

In another study on the sexual identities of Malay males, Jerome (2008) revealed alternative insights into the mainstream ideas of sexuality and sexual identity in modern Malaysian society. Jerome explored the construction of sexual identity of Malay men in literary works of the Malaysian writer, Karim Raslan. Jerome examined the depiction of male sexuality and sexual identity in the main characters in two short stories, *Go East* and *Neighbours*. Karim's representation of gay men in his short-stories challenges the conventional values, norms and boundaries in terms of social and sexual relations between male and female and presents the shifting views of sexuality and sexual identity among Malays today.

Jerome's study shows how the main characters – Mahmud in *Go East* and Mr Kassim in *Neighbour*, construct their sexual identity through negotiating and/or resisting homosexuality. In order to avoid social and religious stigma, these two characters attempted to conceal their homosexual selves by maintaining their masculine roles in public, while assuming their homosexual roles in private. This study reveals that Malay gay male sexual identity “is not only subject to the interplay of individual experiences, sexual object choice and desire, but also the interplay of socio-cultural and religious norms relating to male sexuality and sexual identity” (Jerome, 2008: 43). Another crucial point that this study reveals are the liberated views of religious faith which the author depicts through the character of Kassim and how this character translated these views into his

daily life. Regardless, the religion still plays a role in these characters' construction of identities.

Another study which can be considered significant to this study is the study done by Sharifah Muzlia (1997). In this study she compared feminine male adolescents with masculine male adolescents in regards to their sexual identity and emotional disturbances. Thirty-five masculine school boys and 35 feminine school boys were chosen to participate in her study. Among her major findings were that the feminine boys revealed that they had a high level of inclination to get involved in homosexual relationships; and in addition, they expressed higher intensity of emotional disturbances than the masculine boys.

A more recent study of effeminate young males was carried out by a group of researchers among students of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The study was instigated by the growing concern of the authorities of the university by the rising number of effeminate male students in the university. The effeminate males on campus are generally known as *softies* as their way of dressing and behavior resemble more of a female than male. They are considered as "mild transsexuals" as the extent of their desire to be completely female and to finally have a sex change is not clear (Noraini et al, 2005: 11). There was a concern not only among the university authorities but also the public that this feminine behavior of these males may lead them to transsexuality and homosexuality as these are against the teaching of Islam and also most major religions (Noraini Mohd Noor et al, 2005). The study was conducted with the aim to uncover the reasons for this growing phenomenon which can tarnish the good image of the university. The participants of this research consisted of 150 students who were given questionnaires

to complete in order to ascertain their perceptions concerning *softies* in various aspects. In addition to these 150 students, 25 friends of softies and five softies were interviewed.

This study on *softies* in IIUM had resulted in many noteworthy findings which are somewhat related to this present study. Among the findings is among the five *softies* interviewed, only one had a strong desire to become a woman and the rest, though, they perceived themselves as not entirely male, they had no desire to become women. The findings also revealed that these softies were relatively happy as they were treated well by their classmates and stayed in a much closed knit group. For this reason, they were not distressed by negative perception of some people towards them. These *softies* also reported that they prayed and fasted as what were required of them by Islam and claimed that their *soft* behavior did not violate the teachings of Islam. However, when they were asked to further clarify this religious matter, they chose not to. As they were faithful in observing the Islamic teachings in terms of praying and fasting, they probably felt that their *soft* behavior was justified and therefore, they could continue with their lifestyle (Noraini Mohd Noor, 2005).

2.7 Conclusion

The above discussion shows that the construction of self identity is as much a linguistic phenomenon as it is a sociocultural phenomenon. Identity emerges through linguistic means and strategies of individuals in interactions which are very much influenced by the society he/she lives in. This study aims at exploring the identity construction of four young Malay homosexual males in Malaysia during this contemporary age in the discourse

of their life stories. A discourse is not merely a linguistic construct; it actually involves knowledge of one's culture and society, ideology, individual preferences, etc. Therefore, the discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis which incorporates both the macro- and micro-level of analysis is seen appropriate to framework this study.