

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Ideological change, identity and organisational control in organisational change management

This study seeks to investigate how discourse (types of discourse) is used by management in the construction of identity and shaping of ideology as a focus for examining organisational control in an institution of higher learning that is undergoing change or transformation. It does so via a case study of change in a private institution of higher learning. It focuses on the various discursive means the organisation employs to exert influence over its members. It investigates the discursive processes by which organisational members are enjoined or influenced to define themselves, to think and to act or to adopt work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives and to make sense of the processes that constitute organisational change. The discursive strategies introduced at the institution during the time of the study appeal to the notions of increasing efficiency within the organisation to enable it to be a profitable, sustainable and innovative organisation. This practice of managerial action to unobtrusively develop appropriate identities of organisational members is known as identity regulation by Alvesson and Willmott (2002). It is a form of ideological control or social engineering and is a 'preferred' way to mould members as it is subtle and unobtrusive.

KCUC (the name of the institution is kept anonymous), formerly known as KC College of Technology is one of the private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. It started off as a college and was duly upgraded to a University College in 2003. As a fledgling University College among mammoth well-established institutions in Malaysia, it is poised to take on the challenge of becoming a formidable institution.

1.2 What is an organisation?

The context of this study is an educational institution within the larger context of a conglomeration of twenty-two companies. It therefore is an institutional or organisational setting. It is fitting and appropriate to provide a definition of what an organisation is as it informs about the character of the organisation. This section sets out to elaborate the different definitions of what an organisation is.

The two following sub-sections serve to compare and contrast the changes that organisations have undergone over the last century. They are referred to as modern or bureaucratic organisation and postmodern or post-bureaucratic organisation. These sections set the tone for the study as the organisation in the study in its efforts to stay productive, efficient and competitive is in the midst of implementing organisational changes. It is moving towards a post-bureaucratic type of organisation. The organisational change initiatives put in place at the organisation is to move the organisation forward.

According to Peters & Waterman (2006), organisations are *social systems* that coordinate people's behaviour by means of roles, norms and values. *Roles* relate to the particular place and functions of an individual. These are defined within a system that is internally differentiated in ways relevant to the system's operation. These can be thought of as group-based categories of position and activity. *Norms* are attitudinal and behavioural prescriptions associated with these roles or categories. They create expectations about how a person or group of people ought to think, feel and behave. They tend to be defined externally (e.g. in formal job descriptions or informal codes of conduct) but are internalised by individual group members. Finally, *values* are higher-level principles that are intended to guide this behaviour and the organisation's activity as a whole.

In organisations, this system of roles, norms and values exists for specific purposes and are intentional. It generally works to direct and influence individuals' behaviour and activities in line with these purposes. Not taking into consideration whether this purpose is explicit, implicit, manifest or latent, this point is fundamental to most definitions. On the basis of observations that in all organisations there exists an *internal system* of social relations between groups; there also exists differentiation in terms of shared roles, norms, values, power and status. Statt (1994) abstracts three core features of organisations from a range of different definitions. He suggests that an organisation is: (a) a group with a *social identity*, so that it has a psychological meaning for all the individuals who belong to it (resulting, for example, in a shared sense of belonging); (b)

characterised by *coordination* so that the behaviour of individuals is structured and (c) *goal directed*, so that this structure is oriented towards a particular outcome.

Partly because of their regulatory function, the proliferation of roles, norms and values within any particular organisation serves to create shared meaning for its members. This provides each organisation with a distinct organisational culture which sets it apart from others.

Institutions are intrinsically bound up with power, and are often seen to serve the interests of a particular group. Agar (1985) defines 'institution' as a "socially legitimated expertise together with those persons authorised to implement it" (p.164). This suggests that institutions can comprise any powerful group and are not restricted to material locations. Agar's definition also implies that institutions produce binary and asymmetrical roles: the 'expert' (or institutional representative) who is invested with institutional authority, and the 'non-expert' (usually the client), who must accommodate to the institutional norms.

The idea that institutions wield enormous power, crushing individual's speaking rights and imposing bureaucracy, is informed by several theorists (for example, Althusser, 1971; Habermas 1987). These versions of 'institution' assume a coercive and one-sided imposition of power from one dominant party upon another. However, other accounts adopt a more complex definition of power, treating it as a phenomenon that is achieved by persuasion, consensus and complicit cooperation, rather than coercion and oppression

(for example, Foucault 1972). Similarly, Gramsci (1971) introduced the concept of hegemony; “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (p. 12) to explain the way social groups sustain their prominent position in cultural life.

Another theorist to highlight the ‘productive’ potential of institutional power is Giddens (1981, p. 67, emphasis in original) who argues that “(A)t the heart of both domination and power lies the *transformative capacity of human action*.” These views of power provide a theoretical lens through which to approach the analysis of institutional interaction, and by construing power as a process or action, it is possible to analyse it.

1.3 Types of organisation

There are different types of organisations which have evolved over the years. This section compares and contrasts the modern or bureaucratic organisation with the postmodern or post-bureaucratic organisation.

1.3.1 Modern organisation

The concept of bureaucracy is used to signify all forms of reasonable or realistic organisation. This is in accordance with Weber's (1978) definition of the ideal type of organisation which is characterised by hierarchical authority relations, division of labour and authority, subjection to impersonal rules, specification of functions, defined spheres of competence, and coherent system of discipline and control (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009). In summary, the modern organisation is seen as an entity which can be defined as pursuing the logic of standardisation in terms of work processes, hierarchical relations, and discipline in order to accomplish defined goals. According to Jaffe's (2001) definition, bureaucratic organisations are based on three basic principles: first is formalisations, which refer to rules, procedures, and policies which are clearly laid out and have to be adhered to, second; instrumentalism; where the organisation functions and performs tasks to achieve specific organisational goals in a conservative way and finally, a bureaucratic organisation is based on rational-legal authority (authority which is based on formal position, which is derived from personal qualifications and merits).

A fundamental aspect of bureaucracy is the division or delegation of work where the employees are responsible for their roles and accomplishments within the organisation. Therefore, the demarcation of responsibility is critical to the effectiveness of the system as a whole. The main focus is on control and the efficient fulfilment of pre-defined

goals. The assumption underlying this description, however, is that the environment is stable and predictable.

According to Morgan (2006), the main shortcoming of this type of system is the strict separation between decision-making (intellectual) and production (physical) activities. There is inflexibility in the system and inadequate response to changing environments. The ever changing environments call for flexibility and bureaucratic organisations are ill equipped to deal with changes. In response to this reality, the concept of the postmodern organisation was proposed. This is discussed in the following section.

1.3.2 Postmodern organisation

The notion of post-modernism as ‘a very slippery concept’ was highlighted by Willmott (1992). It is almost impossible to define post-bureaucratic organisation precisely. The transition from the ‘old’ paradigm to ‘new’ paradigm of post-bureaucratic organisations is discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4. According to Senge (1990), the postmodern world is challenged with a greater than before rate or pace of change, global competitiveness, advanced information or knowledge revolution, electronic revolution, tumultuous and volatile environments. Flexibility to address these changes and organisational responsiveness are becoming crucial to ensure the survival of organisations.

In contrast to bureaucratic organisations, in which the concept of parochial responsibility is inherent, in a postmodern organisation everyone shoulders responsibility for the success of the organisation as a whole. Individual contributions are linked to the organisational goals and there is extensive sharing and dissemination of information for a common shared vision or the greater good of the organisation as a whole.

The contrasts between modern organisation and postmodern or post-bureaucratic organisation serve to differentiate the ways of doing, being and acting of organisational members. This sets the focus of this study as the organisation in this study is in the transition phase of transformation – moving towards a radical postmodern organisation to meet the ever changing needs of society.

1.4 Organisational control

Organisational control is part and parcel of management. Management in seeking to address issues such as productivity, efficiency and survival needs to have control over its employees. Managerial control has not vanished in the postmodern organisation. It is only the means and methods which are employed to manage control processes which have changed. Jaffe (2001) describes the change in roles of employees in the postmodern organisation. He says: “ ... it is more than the formal working role and the informal nonworking role; rather it is a human who might be developing multiple identities and roles at work, employing multiple sensemaking perspectives, and

occupying positions of authority and subordination simultaneously” (p. 89). Employees do more multitasking and thus assume different roles and identities.

Deetz (1995) expounds that managerial approach to organisational control is about “managing the ‘insides’ – the hopes, fears and aspirations of workers, rather than their behaviours directly” (p. 87). The aim is to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of employees and direct their roles and activities towards the fulfilment or accomplishment of organisational goals. Definitions of reality as espoused by the management are thus established in an organisation and organisational members are exhorted to adopt this reality.

Flamholtz et al. (1985) define organisational control as the process of influencing the behaviour of people as members of a formal organisation. Similarly, Henderson and Lee (1992), Kirsh (1996) and Orlikowski (1991) have interpreted control in terms of the influence on the subordinates to seek their compliance with organisational goals. Thus, organisations engage in various discourses to impart the ‘reality’ or ideology that they want to promote so that organisational members can be allied with it.

Another way is through the construction of ‘ideal’ identities among organisational members. The ‘ideal’ identities are prescribed traits, characteristics and behaviour that are deemed to be beneficial to an organisation and are promoted among organisational members. Following is a discussion on organisational identity as this serves to explain the inclusion of the study of identity as one of the constructs in this study.

Organisational control over members can also be accomplished through the promotion and inculcation of an organisation's identity. Organisational identity refers to those core, distinctive, and enduring features which are distinctive to an institution (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and answers questions such as "Who are we?" "What are we doing?" "What do we want to be in the future?" Thus, management in defining an organisation's identity is able to establish a focus that serves as the guiding principle for organisational members to engage in activities that are deemed to be beneficial (Albert & Whetten, 1985). It provides both the management and its members a key lens to interpret and make sense of events in the organisation (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). This interpretation and sensemaking by the members influences and controls members' behaviour and actions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Thus, organisational control is achieved.

This study seeks to examine how control among organisational members is achieved through the discursive construction of ideology and identity in organisational change management initiatives.

1.5 Organisational change

All organisations at some time or other have to change due to various reasons. Organisations are dynamic and changing entities in a turbulent and rapidly changing world. They change on a fairly regular basis. New business realities in the form of unexpected technologies, emerging markets, and radical innovations continually present fresh challenges to organisations. To survive, be competitive and stay ahead of rivals, companies have to quickly adapt to the new realities. This requires managers to implement and manage change effectively.

This fact has become an obligatory reference in introductory preambles of management textbooks. This is especially true of books on organisational change. In the preface of French and Bell's popular textbook on organisational change, French and Bell (1999) assert:

Organisations face multiple challenges and threats today – threats to effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability; challenges from turbulent environments, increased competition, and changing customer demands (p. xiii).

Similar sentiments are also expressed by Harvey and Brown (2001). Harvey and Brown assert:

In the past, managers aimed for success in a relatively stable and predictable world. However, in the hyper turbulent environment of the 21st century, managers are confronting an accelerating rate of change. They face constant innovation in computing and information technology and a chaotic world of changing markets and consumer lifestyles. Today's learning organisation must be able to transform and renew to meet these changing forces (2001, p. xviii).

These assertions posit the fact that organisations have to readily learn, embrace and adapt to changes in order to face the challenges of an ever changing world (David Grant et al, 2005). These assertions are also highlighted in many other organisational change texts (see Burke, 2002; Dawson, 2002).

Organisational change expert Peter Senge, (1992) in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*, stresses that organisational change requires alignment in which all members of a team have a commonality of purpose, a shared vision, and an understanding of how their individual roles contribute and support the overall vision of an organisation. He says that "Alignment is the necessary condition before empowering (the individual) ... (once aligned) the individual will empower the whole team" (p. 234).

Thus, aligning organisational members with the organisational goals and objectives empowers individuals who share these goals. The more individuals there are who share

or are aligned with the organisational goals; the more successful is the organisational change process.

Organisational change however can have conflicting effects on an organisation, as well as the organisation's individual employees. Some individuals will hail change because it provides them opportunities to expand their professional development and fulfils their motivation and need for growth, whereas others might dread change because they may find change painful and demanding, especially as implementing change may require them to exert extra effort and entails shifts in the way they do their work. It can counteract their external motives for employment. They might ask "Why should we change? We're doing fine!"

This section has served to highlight the fact that organisational change is inevitable. In fact it is necessary for the survival of any organisation. Thus, the rationale for the organisation in the study to effect imminent changes is established.

The data for the study is derived from the organisation's initiatives to effect changes in the organisation for example through the 'Sharing Sessions', articles in the organisation's newsletters and memoranda disseminated by the Human Resource Department of the organisation. The 'Sharing Sessions' which were conducted were attended by the organisational members. The sessions served as a means of disseminating information about the restructuring of the organisation, plans for the transformation of the organisation, new policies, and new ways of doing things. The

articles and the memoranda were also means of consolidating, reiterating and reinforcing what was shared at the ‘Sharing Sessions’.

The following section introduces the context of the study – the organisation.

1.6 Research context - The organisation

KCUC (a pseudonym) is one of twenty-two companies under the parent company, PS (a pseudonym). It was formerly the Research and Training Institute of the Public Works Department, Malaysia. In 1997, it was privatised. In 1998, a college was established and made the focus of the company’s tertiary education activities. In 2001, the college changed its name to further strengthen its niche in the provision of technology and infrastructure based programmes. In 2003, the college was upgraded to a University College status, and is now known as KCUC.

In line with the company’s development plans, the company’s 10-year Strategic Business Blueprint (2007-2016) was launched on 10th January 2007 by the Chairman upon celebrating the PS Company’s tenth year of operations. It is fundamentally a roadmap developed to charter the Company’s journey for the next decade while anticipating one particularly unavoidable challenge: the end of government concession in the year 2011. Being a government entity previously, major government funded projects such as building bridges and roads are accorded to the company. Since

privatisation, the company has had a fifteen year concession period with the government during which government projects are handled by the company. The concession period with the government ends in the year 2011. Whether the concession period would be renewed by the government is a matter of grave concern to the company.

With this impending reality, the company seeks to be independent and self-sufficient. The management has shifted its focus from engineering to education as it feels that education as an enterprise would be more enduring for the future. The focus therefore is now on developing KCUC. Hence, there is a need to change the traditional concept of an educational institution as merely an education provider to that of a business enterprise which would eventually contribute to the collective earnings of the company.

To expedite change within the organisation, the management put forth the 10-year Strategic Business Blueprint effective from the year 2007 until the year 2016. It spells out the initiatives to be taken, the time frame, and strategies for implementation. It also comprises three stages or phases of transformation: business transformation, people transformation and infrastructure transformation.

In line with the business transformation as outlined in the blueprint, the company was restructured into four broad categorisations with the acronym B.E.S.T (B for Building and Infrastructure; E for Education and Training; S for Services and Consultancy and T for Technology and Research). Each of the companies under the parent company was categorised under these headings according to its areas of specialisation. KCUC comes

under the 'Education and Training' category. The business transformation of KCUC started in 2008 with the restructuring of management at the top levels followed by restructuring of the academic, student affairs, and postgraduate divisions at the institution.

After the restructuring of the individual companies under the flagship of the parent company, the 'People Transformation' phase was embarked on; where the company feels that employees' mindsets and outlook need to be transformed to be in line with the "the 10-year Strategic Business Blueprint 2007-2016". In the words of the Managing Director, in the foreword of the souvenir programme for the launch of the blueprint,

"Today we celebrate ten years of drama – challenges, anxiety, perseverance, character, achievements, joys and setbacks. We have grown up, moulded certain character traits, and we want to grow further along a pre-determined path. One unavoidable challenge is the end of concession in the next five years. To confront it successfully, we have decided to prepare ourselves well in advance by planning for the future life without concession...Thus we have come up with a blueprint. It answers the basic why, what, who, where, when and how to guide us so that PS would be able to act in concert in complete harmony, synergy and energy as one vision, one team. All of us in PS should arm ourselves with the core values of Quality, Caring and Sharing and confidently move forward, produce the BEST output to the delight of our customers and clients, achieve our KPIs and get ourselves rewarded accordingly. Seeing PS transform itself into the centre of excellence for total infrastructure solutions is a wonderful self-fulfilling exercise. Let us promise ourselves, there shall be no turning back".

As part of this phase, sharing sessions with the staff, training programmes and the establishment of a council to address issues pertaining to staff development were initiated. The sharing sessions were conducted both at the company as well as the institutional (KCUC) level. The total number of organisational staff is approximately six hundred and the number of staff at the institution is approximately two hundred and fifty. The approximate number of staff who attended each of the sessions was about two hundred.

The core values of the company were emphasised through a three-month core values campaign in which the ‘Sharing Sessions’ emphasised the core values and the sub-themes and members were given badges to wear to remind them of the company’s core values. Quizzes were conducted after each of the core value sharing sessions to check whether employees had comprehended the significance of the values.

In line with the ‘People Transformation’ phase, special taskforces were established such as ‘Right Mindset’, ‘Right Recognition’, ‘Right Management’, and ‘Right Human Resource (HR) Development’. The ‘Right Mindset’ committee was entrusted with the responsibility of how to change the mindsets of employees and they did this through articles in the newsletters and through the organisation’s email. The committee’s responsibilities were to propose activities and programmes on how to improve the mindsets of employees, inculcate the core values of the company and to review policies and procedures. The ‘Right Recognition’ committee’s responsibility was to study employees’ contributions, propose criteria for award and incentives, retain top talent and

give due recognition to performing staff members. The 'Right Management' committee was to look into the management structure of the organisation and ensure 'right seating' (the right people at the right posts) while the 'Right Human Resource (HR) Development' committee was to map relevant skills, qualifications and traits of employees to enable 'right seating' (the right person holding the right position), propose for human resource development in line with business forecast and succession planning, identify and propose the necessary skill sets and level of competency required for certain positions and to facilitate the mobility of employees within the company.

The next phase of transformation is the infrastructure transformation where the physical development of the hundred acre premises would take precedence. The infrastructure of KCUC itself will be developed further with the development of new buildings and upgrading of existing facilities to house the various faculties. Plans are afoot to develop the hundred acre area as a commercial, residential and educational hub to support the development of the institution.

The transformation of the organisation which comprises three phases; business, people and infrastructure transformation is encapsulated in the visual form of an aeroplane in flight. This is the metaphor which is used to indicate the thrust of the transformation. The tagline for the transformation is 'Moving Forward'. It is reproduced in Appendix 23.

The company has its own newsletter for internal circulation among employees of the company. It is issued four times a year and is made available at strategic venues throughout the company premises. In this newsletter articles are written and contributed by staff and cover all aspects of corporate experiences, activities, updates on events, core values and knowledge sharing.

In line with the organisational change initiatives in the year 2007, all companies have been directed to hold ‘Sharing Sessions’, a platform in which the top management is able to disseminate its policies, information, ideas, and ideology to the employees. At KCUC, the ‘Sharing Sessions’ were conducted twice a month. It is these ‘Sharing Sessions’ which are the focus of the present study (see section 4.5, Chapter 4). Besides the ‘Sharing Sessions’, the study also examines articles in the organisation’s newsletters as well as memoranda sent out by the Human Resource (HR) Department.

Articles which were published in the organisation’s newsletters during this phase were also related to the theme of change; the need for and the inevitability of change within the organisation (see section 4.9, Chapter 4). The Human Resource Department of the organisation also sent out memoranda relating to the core values and the need for change. Further reference to these sources of data is discussed in Chapter 4. A discourse analytical approach using discourse analysis and Norman Fairclough’s framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (2004) is used to study how the management uses the ‘Sharing Sessions’, the articles and the memoranda as discourse of transformation to

regulate the identity of the employees at KCUC as well as to promote a certain ideology, which can be construed as organisational control.

In light of what has been discussed so far, this study therefore aims to explore and describe how the organisation uses discourse in the social practice of organisational change management which ultimately leads to the alignment or realignment of organisational members mindsets to organisational goals.

1.7 Studies related to control in organisations

Studies on organisational control have been researched widely in the areas of applied linguistics, sociology, social psychology and organisational studies. However, specific research on control in educational institutions undergoing organisational change management is rather scarce. Since there is no specific study done in a similar context, the studies reviewed in this section encompass various fields of study.

Two examples of work done on identity in organisations in Asia are Chan (2008) and Kong (2001). Chan (2008) examined the discursive construction of identity within the social practice of organisational control in network marketing discourse. She investigated ideological control from the lens of identity construction in the managerial discourse of a network marketing organisation. The study focused on the construction of the 'ideal' member identity, the strategies used to accomplish this identity and how the

'ideal' identity serves the objective of organisational control. The data comprised transcripts of five recorded training presentations of a network marketing organisation in Malaysia. The findings reveal that the 'ideal' member identity is a means by which the organisation inculcates a self-disciplining or 'obedient' membership. Identity regulation provides the means for the organisation to get its members to voluntarily 'work' for it.

Kong (2001) also studied the construction of identity. In comparing the director's message in the annual reports of three types of organisations (the network marketing organisation, the non-profit help organisation and the for-profit business enterprise) he concluded that the network marketing organisation, despite being a commercial organisation, projects an identity of itself as that of a non-profit help organisation. Through the skilful use of linguistic structures, the message of the director of the network marketing organisation serves to forge a personal and close relationship with its members and at the same time assume power and authority over them.

Alvesson and Karreman (2004) in their study of a knowledge-intensive firm, label managerial attempts at managing experiences such as beliefs, meaning, norms and interpretations among organisational members as "socio-ideological forms of control" (p. 435). The effect of new knowledge creation in this management method is due to the fact that self-organising processes are embraced and control is accomplished through the use of definitions of widely understood interpretations and meanings.

1.8 Objective

This study focuses on discourse of transformation and the power it wields as an object of discursive construction of reality within the practice of organisational change management and organisational control in an institution of higher learning that is undergoing change or transformation. The process of organisational change is enacted through discourse of transformation. This study puts forth the proposition that through the artful use of discourse, management asserts its power and is able to secure members' conformity to organisational goals and objectives. Management attempts to align or realign organisational members to change their ways of thinking and embrace change. By "managing the insides" of members, the management seeks to gain the support and allegiance of its members.

The objective of the study is to examine how discourse is used to 'manage' change in producing a member identity that serves the purpose of the organisation's change initiatives. This is part of the people transformation phase of the organisation. The fact that the organisation has put forward the 10-year Business Blueprint proves that it fervently wants to implement changes at the various levels. In order for changes to take place, members must be open to take on added responsibilities, be accountable, be innovative and possess forward thinking. The organisation needs committed and dedicated members who are able to think out-of-the-box.

The objective of the study therefore serves to examine the process of ideological construction or change in mindsets and identity construction of the organisational members as part of the organisation's change initiatives. Furthermore the study also examines how control is implicated in this process.

1.9 Sources of data

Three sources of data were used in the study: the 'Sharing Sessions', memoranda from the Human Resource (HR) Department and articles in the organisation's newsletters (see sections 4.5, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9). The 'Sharing Sessions' which were used as a platform to disseminate the importance of the organisation's core values of Sharing, Caring and Quality, the notes or messages from the HR Department complementing the 'Sharing Sessions', and the articles in the organisation's newsletters highlighting the need for and the importance of change are examined.

1.10 Research questions

Nine ‘Sharing Sessions’, ten articles from newsletters and two memoranda from the Human Resource Department of the institution are chosen for analysis. The analyses of these are guided by the following questions:

1. What does the organisational discourse represented through the “Sharing Sessions”, messages from the HR department and articles in the organisation’s newsletters hope to achieve?
2. What types of discourses are appropriated in the construction of ideological change?
3. What ideology (beliefs, principles) or change in thinking is promoted among organisational members?
 - a. What are the strategies employed to communicate this?
4. What identities are constructed for members of the organisation?
 - a. What characteristics, traits, values, attitudes and behaviour of the ‘ideal’ organisational members are promoted or prescribed?
 - b. How are these characteristics, traits, values, attitudes and behaviour communicated to the organisational members?
 - c. What are the linguistic strategies employed to communicate these characteristics, traits, values, attitudes and behaviour?
 - d. How are members positioned to accept these identities?
 - e. How are identities privileged and marginalised?
5. How are alternative versions of identities and worldviews denied?

1.11 Overall research framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

The overall research framework which is used in the study is critical discourse analysis (CDA). The rationale for the choice of using this approach is outlined below.

Critical discourse analysis is used for various reasons. First, critical discourse analysis enables an interdisciplinary approach to be taken in analysing discourse for research that is socially and practically oriented (Fairclough, 2004). CDA provides a framework for analysing data (both oral and written) within the contexts of discursive and social action that impacts wider societal issues. It is not just about the analysis of structures in texts, but how these structures are expressed to create meaning and action in a social context.

CDA adopts a critical approach to language as it exposes associations that may be opaque or hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power and ideology. As CDA is interdisciplinary in its approach (Fairclough, 2004; Van Dijk, 2004; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisgl & Liebhart, 1999; Wodak, 2004), it is appropriate to be used in this study which is of an interdisciplinary flavour. Apart from linguists who have used CDA to study discursive processes within institutions (for example Wodak (1996), Hall, Sarangi and Slembrouck (1999), Kong (2001) and Chan (2008)), organisational researchers have also used CDA to study organisational processes (for example Alvesson and Willmott (2002), Grant, Keenoy and Oswick (2001), Hardy and Phillips (1999), Hardy (2001) and Willmott (1993)).

Second, CDA maintains that language is not transparent. The use of language in discourse and its reproductive effects are often dictated and legitimised through the mechanisms of “inculcation” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 62) and the construction of “common sense” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 64) which are often hidden or invisible to participants. Discourse is able to impart and promote ideologies and therefore is deemed to carry out ideological work. In other words, ideologies are often produced or shaped through discourse (refer to section 2.3.1). In order to comprehend how ideologies are produced and promoted, it is insufficient to analyse textual data alone; the discursive practice (how the texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have) must also be considered (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Ideologies are embedded in features of discourse which are taken for granted as matters of common sense. Through CDA, language and the context in which it is used can be studied or scrutinised to expose how discourses are appropriated to accomplish the goals of social actors. In this study the concept of organisational control is framed as an ideological practice of an organisation through the use of discourse of transformation. In this light, CDA is an appropriate approach to illuminate and expose the use and effects of language to accomplish this ideological practice.

Third, CDA can be utilised to study the exercise of power by the social actors as well as the hidden power behind discourses. It proposes that those conventionalised power structures shape discourse and are reproduced in discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Since this study aims to study organisational control through organisational change management, the exercise of the discursive construction of power is inextricably

implicated. CDA's theories of language and power can provide valuable insights into how management uses discourses (discourse of transformation) to exert control over its members.

Fourth, CDA sees the relationship between language and society as mutual or as being dialectical. This means that the relationship is two-way; language is influenced by society and on the other hand, society is fashioned by language. Thus, language as social practice and society have a dialectical relationship. This means that discourse constructs situations, identities of people, ideologies and knowledge.

Fifth, CDA lends itself to the study of change. For instance, Fairclough (2001) argues that language has become important in a variety of social processes in society. This includes the emergence of an economy which is based on knowledge or is better known as the 'knowledge based economy' and change that is brought about in society through the use of discourse. He refers to this as 'discourse driven' social change (Fairclough, 2001). Such changes, he asserts have had an impact on the types or orders of discourse. With the increasing importance of language in social life, conscious attempts to shape and control it in order to accomplish organisational objectives or motives have become evident. Thus, CDA is an appropriate resource which can be used for researching change in the present-day or contemporary social life.

1.12 Significance of the study

This study of discourse of transformation in organisational change management encompasses two fields of study: discourse analysis as a branch of linguistics and the study of organisational change management as a branch of management studies and organisational control. The use of discourse analysis thus contributes to both linguistics and management studies. It extends the work of linguists who have applied discourse analysis to study organisational settings (Chan, 2008, Kong, 2001; Wodak, 1996; Hall, Sarangi & Slembrouck, 1999) as well as organisational researchers who have used discourse analysis in studying organisational issues (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002; Grant, Keenoy & Oswick, 2001; Hardy & Phillips, 1999; Hardy, 2001; Wilmott, 1993).

Since there is a scarcity of studies done on educational institutions undergoing organisational change, this study serves to illustrate a case study. This study, therefore contributes to the gamut of studies done on other types of organisations or industries undergoing organisational change such as health, insurance, leisure, airlines and so on.

Furthermore, this study examines a private educational institution which is part of a conglomeration of companies. This gives it a unique character. This situation is becoming popular with large organisations in Malaysia which are seeking to diversify their businesses. Some of these large organisations are venturing into the business of education. The notion is that providing education is a stable business and therefore a viable and profitable business. Since Malaysia aspires to be an educational hub in Asia,

various organisations or enterprises in Malaysia are venturing into the business of education. Further discussion on education as a business enterprise is given in Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

Thus, for institutions which are in such a unique situation such as KCUC, when organisational change management is initiated at the company level, the educational institution within the company is also inevitably involved in the process but this however may affect how it functions as an education provider. The organisational change initiatives cascade from the organisational level to the group level and ultimately to the level of the individual. This study therefore contributes to the study of such institutions which are in such a unique position.

Next, the study's focus on identity and ideology as discursive phenomenon in organisational change management contributes to the development of strategies that organisations can employ to bring about change in an organisation. The artful use of discourse in identity and ideology construction serves to show how organisations can successfully bring about change in organisational members.

1.13 Scope and limitations

The limitation of this study is in the sample of texts, articles and memoranda used. These sources of data are taken from only one organisation. This limitation is, however,

unavoidable as discourse analytical research is interpretative and involves a time-consuming and intensive treatment of texts. Furthermore, the objective of the study is to illuminate the use of discourse in a specific context. It does not propose a generalisation of organisations undergoing change management.

The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of discourse as used by certain members of management, and so does not include the analysis of discourse of organisational members. Thus, it makes claims only on the act of constructing and regulating member identities and ideologies or mindsets. It does not include the responses of organisational members to this regulation attempt.

1.14 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has discussed the rationale of the study, described the research context, reviewed relevant studies, presented the research objectives and research methodology, and highlighted the significance of the study as well as its scope and limitations.

The study aims to illustrate that identity construction and transformation of mindsets are central in organisational change management. It proposes to use a critical discourse analytical framework to analyse the construction of identities and change in ideologies or mindsets to effect control over organisational members.

The organisation selected for the study is an educational institution which is also part of a larger company or organisation. This, therefore, is a rather unique situation. Unlike other educational institutions, either public or private, this institution functions as the educational arm of the company whose main concern is engineering. It therefore has a two-fold role; to provide education as its core business as well as to contribute towards the well-being of the company as a whole.

The process of identity construction of the institution's members and transformation of mindsets during the organisation's change management initiatives and how this implicates control is the primary focus of this study. Critical discourse analysis is used as the method of analysis of the data. This approach is used to explicate the meanings, processes and implications of control in the discourse.