

Discourse in Institutional Administration of Public Universities in Ghana: A Shift towards a Market Paradigm?

Dora Francisca Edu-Buandoh
University of Cape Coast

Abstract

Language as an ideological tool is used in discourse by institutions, sometimes to change their discourse in order to buy into existing economic as well as social powers. In recent years, Ghanaian public universities have changed the discourse used in defining their aims and objectives. This paper uses Fairclough's model for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse documents that lay out the strategic plan that redefine the visions, aims, and objectives of four public universities in Ghana. The analysis shows that there is a shift from the traditional academic discourse to a *marketisation* discourse. The changes are evident in the linguistic features as well as the orders of discourse that shape the universities as corporate bodies in a business marketplace. The paper also discusses the relationship between this discourse shift and the positioning of public universities in Ghana.

Introduction

The emergence of corporate strategies for universities in Ghana has come as an answer to the demand for clearly spelt out visions that position institutions of higher learning in the global marketplace to contest with other institutions of higher learning on equal footing. Furthermore, the government of Ghana has charged the universities to come out with strategies that would make the universities generate their own funds to supplement what the government offers for running the universities, and also place the universities at par with businesses on the world market. As a result, all public funded universities came out with individual documents entitled "*Corporate Strategic Plan*" (CSP).

Until recently, there were three public funded universities in Ghana: University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and the University of Cape Coast (UCC). These three universities were set up with different mandates to foster higher education not only in Ghana, but also in the West Africa Sub region. Because the universities were established either just before independence or just after it, they were shaped to follow the British university system. They were all fashioned on the University of London structure. Degrees were awarded from British universities until the Ghanaian universities became independent and autonomous. Even after they became autonomous, they were still run like British universities, focusing mainly on liberal courses and a few technical and professional courses.

In recent years, three additional public-funded universities have been established. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), which was a university college of the University of Cape Coast was upgraded into a full university. The University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) which was a school in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was also upgraded into a university, and the University of Development Studies (UDS) was set up to cater for the northern sector of the country. This paper

studies the CSPs from only the first three public-funded universities and also from the University of Education, Winneba. The CSP from the University of Mines at Tarkwa and the University for Development Studies are not studied for this paper because they were relatively new and had not been autonomous under the tertiary education in Ghana for long. It is also assumed that UEW's CSP would be representative of the other two new public-funded universities.

As institutions of higher learning, the universities had their own nomenclature, which bordered on education, and was similar to what pertained in most British universities. However, with the coming of globalisation and the quest to fit into the world marketplace, there have been some changes in the general discourse in use in the administration of these institutions. This paper sets out to examine the discourse in documents that have become the acceptable documents used to show the vision and mission of four public funded universities in Ghana. The aim is to show how institutional discourse of the universities has changed over time and also to identify the new institutional identities that change brings into positioning the universities. I use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1983) to show that the discourse that pertained in the administration of public funded universities in Ghana in past years has changed from academic discourse to a discourse which is steeped in business. This perspective is developed from the viewpoint that institutional discourses are linked to the organisation, situated conventions and practices that identify a social organisation as belonging to a particular situated setting (Agar, 1985). The new discourse in use in the CSPs of the universities studied has the tendency of eroding existing discursive systems in academic institutions and replacing them with *marketisation* nomenclature and expectations. The paper seeks first to situate discourse as a tool for use by institutions, then it analyses the data using Fairclough's CDA model. Finally, the paper discusses the positioning of the universities based on the CSPs and the analysis done earlier. The implications for research and institutional change are discussed in the conclusion.

Of Institutions, Institutional Discourse and Discursive Practices

The concept of institution brings into mind many different definitions. There are those definitions that situate institution as a physical setting and those that see it as a social organisation in specific settings such as schools, prisons, church among others (Mayr, 2008). Institutions are also linked to power and may serve the interest of particular groups (Agar, 1985; Mayr, 2008); Institutional power is usually expressed through language. As Mumby (1987) argues, language is a principal means by which institutions create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are. In effect, language becomes a tool for mediating power relations and also identity construction. The language that is used by institutions for crafting their social realities forms part of the discourse that becomes shared in the institution as a community of practice.

The discourse of an institution such as a university is always embedded in the authority and power vested in the institution either by government or by the social structure of the community. As a socially constructed institution, the university, traditionally, uses discourse that is conventionally prescribed by the society as recognised discourse for education administration. The discourse that is conventionally recognised in the

administration of Universities in Ghana tilts towards general administration and education- oriented discourse. It is only in recent years that this academic administration discourse has changed leading to a change in the discursive practices. I discuss the changes in subsequent sections of this paper and draw attention to the attendant changes in discursive practices of the universities studied.

Discourse refers basically to spoken or written language use. It can also be described as “language in use” (Whetherell et al., 2001) and language can be used to mark or deny power, although Wodak (2001) says language on its own has no power, but gains power by the way powerful people use it. Discourse can also be identified as a tool that is used to construct social life but it also becomes an entity that is controlled by society (see Gee, 1999; Fairclough, 1992; Rogers, 2003). Every social organization or institution has its peculiar use of language in discourse patterns and discursive practices. When institutions change their discourse and discursive patterns, the power domains that the ordinary members are brought into symbolise the policing of the institution.

Power is described by many philosophers as one’s ability to control the environment around him but the description does not focus only on humans because an entity which is non-human, can also wield power over the environment. This notion is evident in Foucault’s prison research where he describes the panoptical nature of prison as an institution. The issue of power and the exercise of control is a sociological phenomenon because peoples’ lives are determined and influenced by the processes of change that affect the discursive practices of the institutions that they are affiliated to. Fairclough (1995) explains these power relations further by hinting that “technologization of discourse” in state institutions has led to changes in the discursive patterns of institutions, thus leading to restructuring of discourse to bring out hegemony and power domains in policies and institutional culture.

According to Fairclough (1995) and Gee (1999), discursive practices show that social realities are linguistically constructed and since discourse is context-related discourse can be appreciated as a social action that should be understood not only in the meanings of the text , but also in the negotiated interaction that is related to the utterances. Discursive practices therefore embodies the linguistic meanings available in social realities as expunged in texts, action, and also what is left unsaid in the discourse. Analysis of any discourse, according to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), must thus examine the discourse text in relation to the discursive practices of the society or the institution.

The Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP)

The document for study in this paper is the *Corporate Strategic Plan*. Each University in Ghana is expected by the National Council for Tertiary Education to have a Corporate Strategic Plan that spells out the visions, and mission of the University as well as the plans the University intends to use to realise its visions. The term “Corporate Strategic Plan” has been used in business circles to refer to “the overarching strategy of the diversified firm”; “strategic planning or management decisions that effect the direction or performance of company”; and the “direction an organization takes with the objective of

achieving business success in the long term” among many others. Irrespective of the definition, the purpose of “Corporate Strategic Plan” is to reorganize and restructure a company in order for it to be able to compete successfully with its competitors, and also to achieve the company’s objectives. It could be deduced that the focus of Corporate Strategic Plan is towards the business world, and not the education sector. Recent developments in the world of education, however, hint an adaptation of different discourses to project the sector.

In this paper, I use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1983) to show that the discourse that pertained in the administration of public funded universities in Ghana in past years has changed from academic discourse to a discourse which is steeped in business. The new discourse has the tendency of eroding existing systems in the institutions and replacing them with *marketisation* nomenclature and expectations. The perspective is developed by considering how institutional discourses and settings are reflexively linked, institutions are organized as situated conventions, and institutional discourses involve talk and interpretation and are dispersed within and across settings.

Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Methodology

CDA is a method of studying language use by analysing how power relations influence the content of a text. These dimensions are the links between the text, the characteristics of the discourse practice and the sociocultural practice in which the text is situated. For this paper, the text, which comprises the four the Corporate Strategic Plan documents, has features embedded in institutional discourse which in itself is found in the socio-cultural practice of university administration. CDA has been used in as a methodology in studying organisational discourse. Different discourse analysts propose different methods for doing CDA (cf. van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough 1989, 1995; Kress and Van Leeuwen ,2002; Wodak and Chilton 2005).

This paper uses Fairclough’s CDA as a model for analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as propounded by Fairclough (1995), employs a three-tiered tool of description, interpretation and explanation for analysing texts. These are used to bring the power relationships that exist within the text and the sociocultural environment to bear on the analysis. The three tools used in Fairclough’s model of CDA are appropriate for this analysis because the documents may have hidden discourses that are embedded in the general discourse. Using Fairclough’s model, CDA “foregrounds links between social practice and language, and the systemic investigation of connections between the nature of social processes and properties of language texts” (Fairclough 1995: 96). In a way, language use can thus be seen as a social process through which individuals, organisations, communities and institutions negotiate discourses practices. Fairclough’s model also offers an engaging social science research method for researching into links between language and social processes.

Description as a tool for CDA studies the vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures that are found in the text for analysis. Interpretation in CDA brings to the fore the meaning of the text as well as the meaning that the interpreter, relying on his or her member resources (MR) brings to bear on the text. CDA is not done in abstraction, but

rather, the interpreter brings his previous knowledge and understanding of how the social processes work with regards to the discourse pattern to the interpretation. The Explanation stage shows how the discourse fits into the social practice of the institution or the society, and how the processes contribute to change the structures of the institutions or to sustain the structures. In the subsequent sections, the analysis of documents is modelled after Fairclough's study of the marketisation of public Universities in Britain (Fairclough, 1995).

The Universities Studied

The four institutions whose documents are studied are all public Universities in Ghana. Although each university is autonomous and has its own mandate, all four universities have put together the description and explanation of their vision and mission in *Corporate Strategic Plan* documents. These documents are the analysed texts discussed in this paper. Texts are said to draw from orders of discourse and systems of language. Orders of discourse include the configuration of genres that are linked to specific social domains; that is the "ways of interacting, ways of representing, and ways of being" (Rogers, 2003:9) The orders of discourse of universities as a genre of education, should clearly be shown in the discursive practices, which should include the language use as well as the documents generated by the central authoritative body/bodies. In the setting for this paper, the document, the *Corporate Strategic Plan* is a document generated by the central administration of the universities under study as an order of discourse for the institutions.

The University of Ghana

The University of Ghana was the first University to be established in Ghana (then Gold Coast). It was established as the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948 as an affiliate to the University of London which played an advisory role and awarded the degrees. The purpose for founding the university was to promote university education, learning and research. It became a full autonomous University (University of Ghana) that awarded its own degrees in 1961. Its curricular focus has mainly been on the Humanities, Social Sciences, basic Science and Medicine. In recent years, it has expanded its focus to include programmes in business, adult education and other market driven courses. The university caters for both undergraduate and graduate students. Majority of the students are Ghanaians, but in addition to the 30000 Ghanaian student population, there are also 1142 international students enrolled in undergraduate as well as graduate programmes. (www.ug.gh.edu)

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was the second University to be established in Ghana. Originally named the University of Science and Technology, it was established in 1951 as a replacement for the Kumasi College of Technology. Its first students were teacher trainees who were transferred from another college (Achimota) to start the university. In 1961, the college became a full university and was named Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The name was changed again to University of Science and Technology in 1966 after a military takeover in Ghana. However, in 1998, after the Fourth Republic of Ghana was promulgated, the

University was renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The constant naming and renaming of the institution provides an interesting cue to the power embedded in naming.

The University of Cape Coast

The University of Cape Coast was established in 1962 as a University College of the University of Ghana to train graduate teachers for the second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges and technical institutions not only for Ghana, but also for the West Africa Sub Region. In 1971, the university became autonomous and started awarding its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. In recent years, the University has repositioned itself to train manpower for other areas in the economy, apart from the field of education. The university awards degrees at all levels, and diplomas and certificates in various fields of study. It has a Ghanaian student population of 19, 000 regular students, about 200 international students, and 20, 000 distance learners.

The University of Education, Winneba

The University of Education, Winneba was formerly established in 1992 as a University College of the University of Cape Coast. The college was put together by bringing seven already existing diploma awarding institutions together. These colleges were all awarding diplomas in education with different foci from the University of Cape Coast before they were brought together to form the University College of Education, Winneba. It presently trains mainly graduate teachers at the undergraduate, post graduate and diploma levels. It has a student population of 18,323.

The Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP)

The Corporate Strategic Plan for the four public Universities mentioned above were all put together between 2003 and 2005. The need for putting the plans together as documents came from collaboration of efforts among the development partners of the National Council on Tertiary Education, Donors and the Universities. The purpose was to develop a plan that will help with the administration of the universities in order to ensure proper focus and effective administration of the resources of the institutions. The development partners which includes the World Bank, recommended the use of the Corporate Strategic Plan in order for the institutions to fit into the global milieu. With the coming of the millennium and the attached globalisation of new knowledge and technology, the introduction of the Corporate Strategic Plan that will position Ghanaian universities on the world stage of the market industry was a welcome action for the Universities involved, the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders.

The Corporate Strategic Plans for the four universities under discussion are all structured in the same fashion. Although the documents are designed to show the unique background of each university, the following major sections are common to all:

- a) Overview of the University
- b) The Strategic Plan
- c) Time Frame of the Plan
- d) The Vision

- e) The Mission Statement
- f) Strategic Thrusts
- g) Responsibility and Action Plans

These sections are either stated under the same heading or equivalents. All four documents use SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) Analysis to project the strategic plans. SWOT is a tool that is generally used in the corporate world to assess the capacity of a company and also to organize and make the company respond to the marketing needs of its clients and customers. In addition, the University of Ghana document explained how the University arrived by the SWOT analysis it used. The document indicates that the university used the Hax Methodology (cf. Hax & Nicolas, 1991, 1996 cited in the UG Corporate Strategic Plan) in the planning process to arrive at the model used in the strategy. Because of the similarities in the documents, all four strategic plans are discussed together as one text in this paper. Using Fairclough's model, I describe the discourse in the documents, interpret it critically, and finally explain the processes that are going on in the discursive patterns of the four institutions.

Description of Common Threads

There were some common threads in the CSPs of the universities studied. In describing the discourse used in the documents, I look at the vocabulary, the grammar and the texture of the document. The vocabulary in the four documents is captured extensively from the business domain. The term *corporate* in the title of the document is itself a vocabulary borrowed from the field of business. The Universities in Ghana had never seen themselves as business enterprises until this document was developed. With the use of vocabulary such as *products, facilities, entrepreneurship, accountability, stakeholders, industry, resources, capacity, matrix, business, operational, budgetary, goals, divestiture, cost, value, 'sold'*, among others, the universities have repositioned themselves to fit into the market or the business paradigm. The vocabulary is not limited to only one document, but persists in all four documents.

A careful description of the grammatical structures in the documents yields many stock phrases that are commonly found in the business or corporate world. For example these phrases were identified in the University of Ghana's CSP: *strategic plan, value-adding initiatives, realities of both the internal and external parameters that impact the business, corporate goals, to achieve corporate vision, the business scope and unique competencies that determine why the university will be successful, our consumers (referring to students), harmonize synergies between disciplines to achieve operational excellence, delivery of value to our customers, reward and recognition system that is performance driven, value chain analysis, poor marketing of the university, robust financial management, cost recovery from users, campus with large real estate holdings*, among others.

The following phrases were present in the CSP for the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology: *industrial and socio-economic development, revenue sources, corporate objectives, rate of growth, ownership of processes and outcomes, accountability and responsibility, professional ethics, potential areas of divestiture*,

market value, generate income, bilateral and multilateral collaboration, income generating potentials, wages/salaries, mobilization and management, cost estimates, operational contexts, stakeholders fora, formulation and outputs, fund mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

The University of Cape Coast CSP had the following stock phrases: *strategic plan , operational context, sustainable basis, landed property, consumer-driven market, paucity of resources, under-funding, increasing operational costs, market needs, raw material, tangible and intangible resources, competitive advantage, strategic thinking, education enterprise, changing needs, cost leadership or differentiation, in-depth assessment, value-chain analysis, strategic priorities, development drive, functional strategy, strategic thrusts operational, budgetary estimate, performance metric, target value performance measures, numerical targets, strategic goals, etc.*

In the CSP of the University of Education Winneba, there were not many stock business phrases. However, these phrases can be found: *management structures, demand-driven courses, strategic planning process, ensuring financial self-sufficiency, high staff turn-over.*

Apart from the vocabulary and phrases, the syntax used in the discourse was complex and high sounding leading to a hard texture for the text. There were many complex sentences. A few examples are:

- a. *We will build deeper awareness of the needs of our consumers, especially students, the private and public sectors, governments, and the world community and re-orient our teaching, research and extension activities and harmonize synergies between the disciplines to achieve operational excellence. (UG, 2003:11).*
- b. *To meet the national aspirations and expectations, the university has adopted 15 operational objectives under five strategic objectives that have been grouped into five themes for the plan period (2005-2014) – (KNUST 2005:14)*
- c. *As part of the consultative and participatory process, draft reports should be presented and discussed at a College forum, attended by the academic and non-academic staff, student representatives from various faculties and departments of the Colleges and other stakeholders. (KNUST 2005: 37)*
- d. *This strategic document sets out an agenda for the University to face a number of challenges, notable among which is the need to move away from the tendency of universities in developing countries to cater for only the intellectual elite. (UEW, 2003:2).*
- e. *Adapting to the needs of the consumer-driven market, these private institutions view the student as a customer, target specific functions (based on market needs) and offer programs in a format convenient for the students. (UCC, 2003: 3).*
- f. *An analysis of exogenous factors, which impact (negatively or positively) or are impacted upon by the university's corporate actions, is critical to the determination of strategic priorities. (UCC, 2003: 8).*

- g. *Each department's strategy must respond to the demands arising out of the corporate and presbytery strategies and the requirements arising out of its own environmental and internal analysis. (UCC, 2003: 23).*

A closer look at the above excerpts from the CSPs points to a discourse which is verbose and hard in texture. Though the texts are not in small prints, the texture of the text clouds the meanings embedded in the discourse. The texture makes the texts sound like the proverbial “small print” that consumers find on products and contract documents. The discourse used in the documents can be described as market-oriented because of the choice of vocabulary as well as the aims and objectives for which these choices were made.

There is also local coherence in the texts because the phrases hang together to show connections in meaning between utterances and these meanings are found mainly in the market economy or the corporate world. An expression such as *performance measures* cannot be taken only as a phrase. Rather, looking at it, one can deduce that the two parts are connected for the meaning to be truly business-like. If one separates *performance* from *measures*, the two words in themselves do not have any business connotations. We can apply this local coherence to all the phrases and expressions that we have identified earlier and it would be seen that they are connected only for special effects, which in this case is to present a business-like document.

The choice of the type of vocabulary mentioned earlier projects a competitive front among the universities. Traditionally, the four Universities do not have to compete for students because there are more students qualified for university education than all the universities in Ghana can accommodate. Neither do they have to compete for government subvention because each university has a unique mandate, and depending on the priority of the government of the day, and the number of students enrolled, a university can get a higher or lower percentage of the total monies marked for higher education in Ghana. However, the choice of language, specifically the vocabulary and phrases point to a competition that is fuelled by the quest to behave like a corporate business competing with its rivals. Phrases such as the University of Choice (UCC), the premier University (UG) sound very much like an advertisement for clients than a description for an educational institution. An advertisement for consumers thrives mainly on appeals to pathos rather than logos and considering that universities are institutions of higher learning, one would have expected that they would be showcased as such and not as production companies.

In addition to local coherence, one can also identify global coherence in the text. Global coherence, according to Fairclough (1989) is “how the text hangs together” to bring out the text structure and the “point” of the text. The *Corporate Strategic Plan* as a document has many parts. First there is the introduction and the mission and vision followed by the SWOT analysis.

Fairclough (1995) argues that the relationship between discourse and other social structures points to qualitative difference in what pertains in contemporary social

structures and what could be described as the discourse of such institutions in the past. The order of discourse for the Universities has changed over time, but one can still identify a standard movement from institutional discourse to a market-driven discourse.

Interpretation

Fairclough maintains that in interpreting the discourse, the analyst draws from what is in the text as well as what the interpreter brings, the member resources, to the text. In looking at the CSPs, one can identify the context as higher education. The discursive practice here is that the focus will be on education, development of curricula to improve higher education, policies leading strong academic achievements, and issues related to education. For a university in a developing world, it is possible to find documents drawing from the orders of discourse related to development and infrastructure building. This second part might have been attended to in the documents as one finds words related to infrastructure building. But these are minimal indicating that the focus is not so much on development as it is on presenting the universities are companies ready to make profit.

The layout of the texts itself points to a business document. What is in bold and what is small print give prominence to the frame. The text in the early part hangs together as what the goal of the institutions is. The second part, which is the table, sets out the roles and responsibilities of members of the institution. These roles do not show educational institutions trying to meet their goal of training the manpower for the society. For example, the documents packaged university education as a market-oriented product in contrast to what Fairclough (1995) says, that universities “are unlike real business”. The table also shows expectations of the institutions from these members. A closer look shows some expectations that a corporate enterprise would expect from its employees, not what an educational institution expects from its administration, because business enterprises strategise to make profits whereas educational institutions do not focus on monetary gains.

The CSPs further assume that members of the universities are ready to engage the market discourse in order to generate funds internally for the running of the universities. This assumption could be ideological because it stems from the fact that institutions are assuming a “know all” position of its members and their priorities. Most academics do not really care about how the university makes money to run the wheels; they rather care about teaching and research.

Explanation

The third tier of Fairclough’s model is to explain the discourse in the text. He maintains that the discourse analyst looks at the sociocognitive aspects of text production and interpretation rather than only an analysis of social practices. In explaining the discourse of the corporate strategic plans of the universities studied, the text described and interpreted are analysed in relation to the framework of critical language use and discourse analysis. As mentioned earlier, the explanation stage would indicate how the discourse fits into the social practice of the institution and how the discourse processes, in this situation, the CSPs contribute to change the structures of the institution or to sustain the structures.

A university, according to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, is “an institution of higher learning providing facilities for teaching and research and authorized to grant academic degrees; *specifically* : one made up of an undergraduate division which confers bachelor's degrees and a graduate division which comprises a graduate school and professional schools each of which may confer master's degrees and doctorates”. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines a university as an institution of higher education and research that awards academic degrees in a variety of subjects. An expansion of both definitions will portray that the structures designated for the university as a social institution are totally different from a commercial or corporate organisation. Both the denotation and connotation of the institution called “university” are related to academic degrees and higher learning. The discourse expected in such an environment is therefore supposed to be neutral and linked to the concept of “knowledge as power”.

Considering that universities are social institutions, there are bound to be financial obligations and engagements in their running and development. However, never in the history of universities, had the discourse skewed so extremely to marketisation and corporatization as is found in the orders of discourse of contemporary universities. Universities worldwide had run on grants and government subventions. The practice had not been any different in Ghanaian public universities until the global market drew into its fold higher education and placed it on the same footing as business enterprises. Brenton (2003) observes that the discursive practices of universities have changed from the known academic discourse to a reliance on pragmatics thereby displacing the existing knowledge of the structures expected in a university. The change that has come into the discourse of the universities in Ghana could be seen in the four CSPs described and interpreted earlier in this paper.

The overtone of business discourse and the recurring vocabulary of market discourse may point to intertextuality. However, the question arises as to how much shift from an existing order of discourse to another can actually be described as intertextuality. Fairclough (1995) describes the situation as an example of “technologization of discourse”. He explains that technologization involves:

1. Research into the discursive practices of social institutions and organisation
2. Redesign of those practices in accordance with particular strategies and objectives usually those of managers or bureaucrats, and
3. Training of institutional personnel in these redesigned practices.
- 4.

The four CSPs described earlier can easily fit into Fairclough's description of the technologized discourse. All the four Universities studied set up committees to research into the existing policy structures of their administration, and out of the findings of the committees, the discursive practices were modified. It is the modification that gave birth to the CSPs and subsequent shift of focus from education to business discourse. Looking at the way the administration strategies of these universities are couched in language, the universities seem to be competing with other businesses to produce marketable products like “real businesses”. It is worth noting that although the documents come from different universities that have different mandates, the documents themselves do not show much

difference in their missions and vision, nor the strategies for achieving them. This format is very typical of capitalist fordism, and the urge for everyone to be the same.

Implications and Conclusions

The issue of changing the discourse of universities and other public institutions have implications for these institutions as well as the society. Social change is possible in any society because society is supposed to be dynamic. However, a shift such as the one experienced in the social change affecting universities in contemporary times must be studied very well. The universities in Ghana may not be the only ones that have been influenced so much by the marketisation discourse leading to change in the structures that originally would describe public institutions. There are other studies (Fairclough, e.g. 1993) that have shown the change in the identity of institutions of higher learning and academics. Fairclough (1995) argues that “technologization of discourse” in state institutions has led to changes in the discursive patterns of institutions, thus leading to restructuring of discourse to bring out hegemony and power domains in policies and institutional. Such studies should not be dismissed as peripheral influences of globalisation because they permeate the institutionalised system and derail the focus of education. It is important for universities in Ghana as well as those in other countries to foreground the traditional mandate based on the classical definition of university as a place of higher learning, than to fray into the corporate world where universities do not actually belong. A high focus on gaining monetary profits from running the universities, as could be seen to be the focus in the strategic plans described in the paper, would lead to a change in the curriculum and research interest of universities. Such a change, I argue, will not help develop the manpower and think tank that Universities are supposed to provide for their societies.

Strategic plans in themselves connote competition to win over a supposed opponent. In the business world, this interpretation leads most organisations to concentrate their strategic efforts on constantly improving the goods and services they offer, (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Universities do not produce goods but rather train human resource. Granting that the training of human resource is a service to the society, universities are not competing with opponents, but rather collaborating to provide this service. It is therefore important that the discourse of strategising to overcome an opponent be taken out of the order of discourse of universities, especially public-funded universities in Ghana. Future research can be done to find out the hegemony and power domains that come from these discourse shifts in university documents.

References

- Agar, M. (1985). Local discourse and global research: The role of local knowledge. *Language in Society*, (34), 1-22
- Brenton, F. (2003). Creating Rhetorical Stability in Corporate University Discourse: Discourse Technologies and Change in Written Communication, v20 n4 p391-425
- Chouliaraki L. and Fairclough, N. (1999) Discourse in late modernity. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press
- Corporate Strategic Plan. (2005) University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Corporate Strategic Plan. (2003) Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and

- Technology, Kumasi.
Corporate Strategic Plan. (2003) University of Education, Winneba.
Corporate Strategic Plan. (2003) University of Ghana, Accra.
Fairclough (1989). Language and ideology. *English Language Research*, (3) 9 - 27
Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press
Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketisation of public
Discourse: The Universities. *Discourse in Society*, (4) 133-168
Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis*. Harlow: Pearson Education
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. Harlow: Pearson Education
Foucault, M. (1984). The order of discourse. In Shapiro, M. (Ed.) *Language and Politics*.
Oxford: Blackwell, 108 – 138
Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. London:
Routledge.
Johnson, G. and Scholes, K. (2002). *Exploring corporate strategy: Text and
cases*. (6th Ed). Prentice Hall: Harlow.
Kress, G.R. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2002). *Multimodal Discourse: the modes and media
of contemporary communication*. London: Edward Arnold
Mayr, A. (2008) *Language and Power: An introduction to institutional discourse*.
London: Continuum
Mumby, D. K. (1987). The political function of narrative in organisations.
Communication Monographs, (54) 113-127.
Rogers, R. (2003). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in Education*.
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
University. (2010). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved January 5, 2010,
from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/university>
van Dijk, T. A. (1993) principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*
4:249-285
Wetherell, M. et al. (2001). *Discourse theory and practice: A reader*. London: Sage.
Wodak, R (2001). The discourse-historical approach. Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.)
Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: sage, 63 -84.
Wodak, R. and Chilton, P. (Eds). (2005). *A new agenda in (critical) discourse analysis*.
Philadelphia: John Benjamins North America.