

# **Conversational Code-Switching: Examining Code-Switching Behavior in Multilingual Speakers in Tanzania.**

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# 1. Introduction

A sociolinguistic research focusing on codeswitching behavior in an as of yet unexplored linguistic demographic: the Gujarati Indian community settled in Tanzania.

Analysis of how a network of multilingual speakers in the urban areas of Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Arusha engage in codeswitching in casual conversations.



## 2. Region of Study

**Figure 1:** Map of Tanzania depicting the regions focused on in the study.

Note: Arusha is slightly larger as it includes the municipality of Moshi.





## 3. Codeswitching overview

Bi-and multilinguals have a linguistic repertoire of choices. Gumperz (1982)

Bilingual speakers may code-switch in order to convey their communicative intentions. (Myers-Scotton & Jake, 2017)

The amount and type of code-switching depends on a number of structural, functional and social factors. (Begum et al., 2017)

Can be both metaphorical and situational.

- 1) Metaphorical - dependent on topics. (Gumperz, Ibid, Mckay and Hornberger (1996)
- 2) Situational - dependent on interaction.



Code-switching allows bilinguals to utilise fully their knowledge of multiple languages and shift from one language to another to communicate with others in an unchanged setting. (Bullock & Toribio, 2009)

This point is relevant as the statement is applicable to this study; this dissertation concludes that the participants of this study easily moved from language to another, regardless of setting, but dependent entirely on topical changes.



## 4. Research questions

1) Examining codeswitching.

How are codeswitching patterns interactionally negotiated by each individual? Why does the codeswitching occur?

2) Examining the situational context.

How is English being used by Indian Tanzanian multilinguals in casual group interactions?

Codeswitching categorized by all English linguistic items.



# 5. Theoretical framework

Using time tested methods to analyze new data.

## **The markedness model**

Myers-Scotton (1993a, 2006) ‘... an explanation of speakers’ socio-psychological motivations for engaging in codeswitching.’ (p.75)

This model theorizes that speakers have a sense of linguistic codes available to them for any interaction. (Ibid., p.76)

Codes are chosen based on perception of roles and positions in the conversation.(Ibid.,p.76)



Code choices can be explained for speaker motivations and are both **marked** and **unmarked**. (Ibid, p. 78)

Marked choices are conscious linguistic code choices, while unmarked choices are intrinsic and instinctual. (Ibid, p. 79)

Code choices are **indexical** of the rights-and-obligations (RO) sets between participants in conversational interactions. (Ibid, p.79)





## 6. Participants

A network of participants.

Participants were then sorted according to age ranges.

Secondary categories of generation.

Education included only for sorting purposes.



## Biographical Information

Participant No.	Age Range	Gender	Education Level	Generation (1st/2nd English Speaking)
1	60+	Male	University	1st
2	60+	Male	High School	1st
3	60+	Female	Primary School	1st
4	20+	Female	University	2nd
5	40+	Male	High School	2nd
6	20+	Female	High School	2nd
7	40+	Female	Primary School	2nd
8	60+	Male	High School	1st
9	60+	Male	High School	1st
10	60+	Female	Primary School	1st
11	60+	Female	Primary School	1st
12	20+	Female	High School	2nd
13	20+	Female	University	2nd
14	40+	Male	Primary School	1st
15	60+	Male	University	2nd
16	20+	Female	High School	2nd
17	20+	Female	University	2nd
18	20+	Male	University	2nd
19	60+	Female	Primary School	1st
20	20+	Male	High School	2nd
21	40+	Male	High School	2nd
22	40+	Female	High School	2nd



## 7. Methodology

- Recording naturally occurring conversation of 15-20 minutes in length.
- The participants are not briefed before on what to talk about, just that they are recorded.
- Transcribing conversations to show occurrences of English words.



## 8. Data excerpts

The following are excerpts of the data analyzed.

These are all naturally occurring conversations audio-recorded in 15 minute increments in casual settings.

The conversations are recorded midway through, not the beginning or ending.

Data excerpts contain intralingual translations.



## Analysis

This conversation is casual. It is mostly in Kutchi, except for loanwords, as it is about anecdotes.

P.17: *Ya, asi Goa me boat ja tour hoi ta, sunrise thi sunset ja tour, ghani company hoi tiyu, iniji boatu hoi, nokhi company ji, sunset narela. Crisps ne soda hoi, bitings khali, ne music, live band!*

Yes, there are boat tours in Goa, sunrise to sunset tour, there are a lot of companies who do this, lots of people, to watch the sunset. Crisps and soda, bitings are provided, and music, a live band!

In the above extract, note P.17, relating an anecdote regarding his boat tour in Goa, using English to express excitement, 'Live band! This is a **marked** CS, in communicating his emotion in English, where the unmarked choice for most of the conversation is in Kutchi. This denotes semantic significance (Hadei, Kumar et al, 2016). They state that codeswitching can sometimes be utilized to signal the speaker's attitude, communicative intentions, and emotions to convey linguistic and social information. (p.125)



Conversation 18, participants 4, 17.

Topic: A couple is discussing the importance of education and the future of their children.

Participant (17) Hevar jite vinuta, **education is a must. I won't prioritize my boy child, over my girl children, school** je me. Bathe ke sarkho **chance** dino. **I got a job form 6** karine, baki poi jo **time** acheto, **it is nothing. Monday to Friday** na, baki **Monday to Saturday, 8 to 6:30 or 7, and on a Saturday 8 to 3. My daughter** jo **choice** kare, ke hate rejo ne hin vinejo, kato uthe vinin hin rejo, **we will encourage her, education is a priority now, not weddings.**

Participant (9) **As I said, after 18, I don't want any of my children with me, I want to live with my husband, peacefully, because I know** au kedo **time sacrifice** kario ai ini la, ne kuro kario ai. Bhanai jo jitro thai sagno, bhanaino, ee nai roku ke bhano ne via karo. **It is up to her, (Saniya, her daughter) to decide which way she wants to go, baki asi yu guide** karela. **It is her choice.**

Participant (17) Chokre ke au **guide** karno, ke hi rasto ai, **you can divert** baki rasto ai, **to do the right thing.**

Participant (9) Mu pase **jo law degree** hot, **to I might be a lawyer** hevar. **That could have been something else, baki** hevar toke chio wo ke ee path **mathe I would have been happy, and I'm also happy with the path I chose. Jo lawyer** hot to **full-time** kam kario hot, hevar jerte **my kids** ke **time** dia ti, **I wouldn't have been able to. Aagar vine, you need a partner, but I'm really happy with you guys,** ke ai loka kik **achieve** kario ai, **hard work** karine kik kario ai.

Participant (17) **You two are our role models along with your father. 3 to 4 weeks ago I was discussing with Mzee Wali,** ke panje me, Sumre me, **Professor** ke khadin, **who else is left?** batha pe jo **business** halai ya, ee kiye na vario, to batha chadia nokri kareme. **Family** jo kam koi **successfully** nai halai shagio, **so, chokro avio kam me, example** ai Hajjis ware ji, **their children, grandchildren** halai ta. **The rest: Zero. Aneesa ghanu kare ye, she has a PhD, which is a big thing for us.**



## Conversation 6

Topic: Travel, politics.

Participant (18) **Reading culture destroy** thai vio ai, teni **plane two to three times a week** achno wo, Bukoba, bathe odia, ne poi **bus** thi biye kitek. **Germany** me au wo, **conference** la. Inje pa **Belgium** vio wo, ne poi **Sweden**, visa mile me sau easy ai, **they don't care, at least before** poi Brussels pujio. Brussels me **no one looks at my passport** ache pela puche, baki **once** uthe wo tade khas mind nai karna. Uppsala me bo bha ai, Hussain ne Nazir, **engineer** ai, **my nephew is married to a Swedish lady** to uthe **travel** kare me **show around** kare we. Uppsala ji **universities** bau **fine** ai, ne bau **scenic** gaam ai pote, maja ache. **Europe** me maja avai wi, baki thandi bauwaj vi. **America** ne un baju haji nai pugo baki, baki **I hope** haji **time** ai muke! America baki... **I don't like their politics. They feel as they are the only ones.**

(Continues after his coffee arrives)

Participant (18) Europe me au pan vio ya, lo, ghani jaga te, **England** me bhanio wo, ne Paris vio ya, **Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark**, baki **east** me nai viyo, muke agiya **Poland** me **interest** wo, haji ai. Hi **book** ginia wai ai mola, **And politics in Europe are more for me. We are part of society. Europe also, not like America, they look after one another, taxes, school. Poland ji... inija politics muke interesting laga. Somehow, it seems more interesting to me... compared to US for example, I feel Europe is more interesting.**



## 9. Data analysis

### Analysis

Metaphorical switching, as mentioned previously, refers to topical change.

Largely depends on serious vs. casual topics.

In the above, participants use far more English when discussing a more serious topic.

Rest of the data has many similar examples.





Conversations number	Total word count	Kutchi words	English words	Topic category	Topic	% of English words
14	464	343	121	Casual	Casual Catching Up	26%
17	236	198	38	Casual	Trips to India	16%
4	413	257	156	Serious	Tanzanian Politics	38%
6	350	105	245	Serious	Travels and Politics	70%
11	820	521	299	Serious	Higher Education for Girls	36%
12	254	191	63	Serious	Education, community	25%
15	459	223	236	Serious	Voter Registration	51%
18	737	400	337	Serious	Education	46%
Average number of words	467	280	187			



**Figure 3: Kutchi vs. English Word Count**

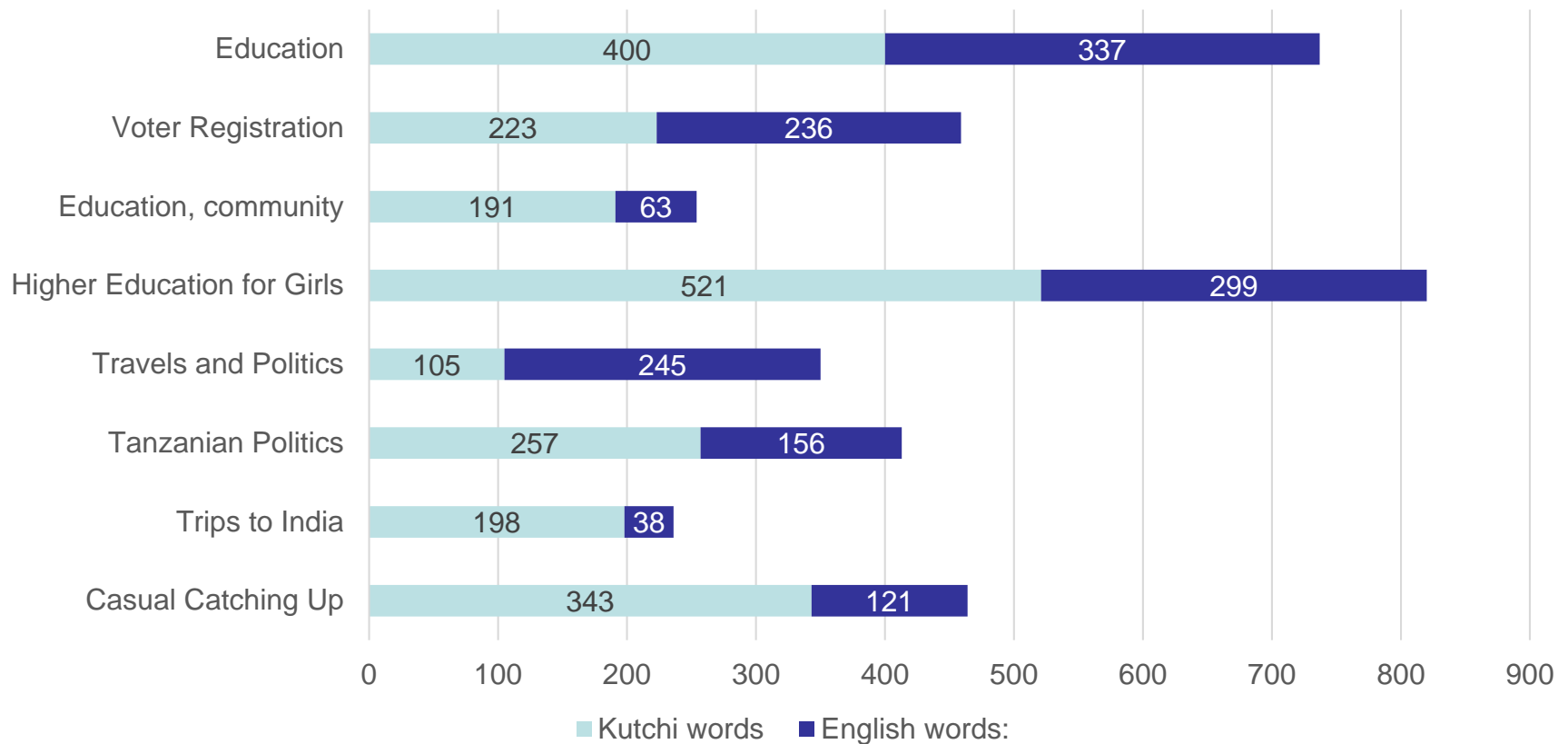
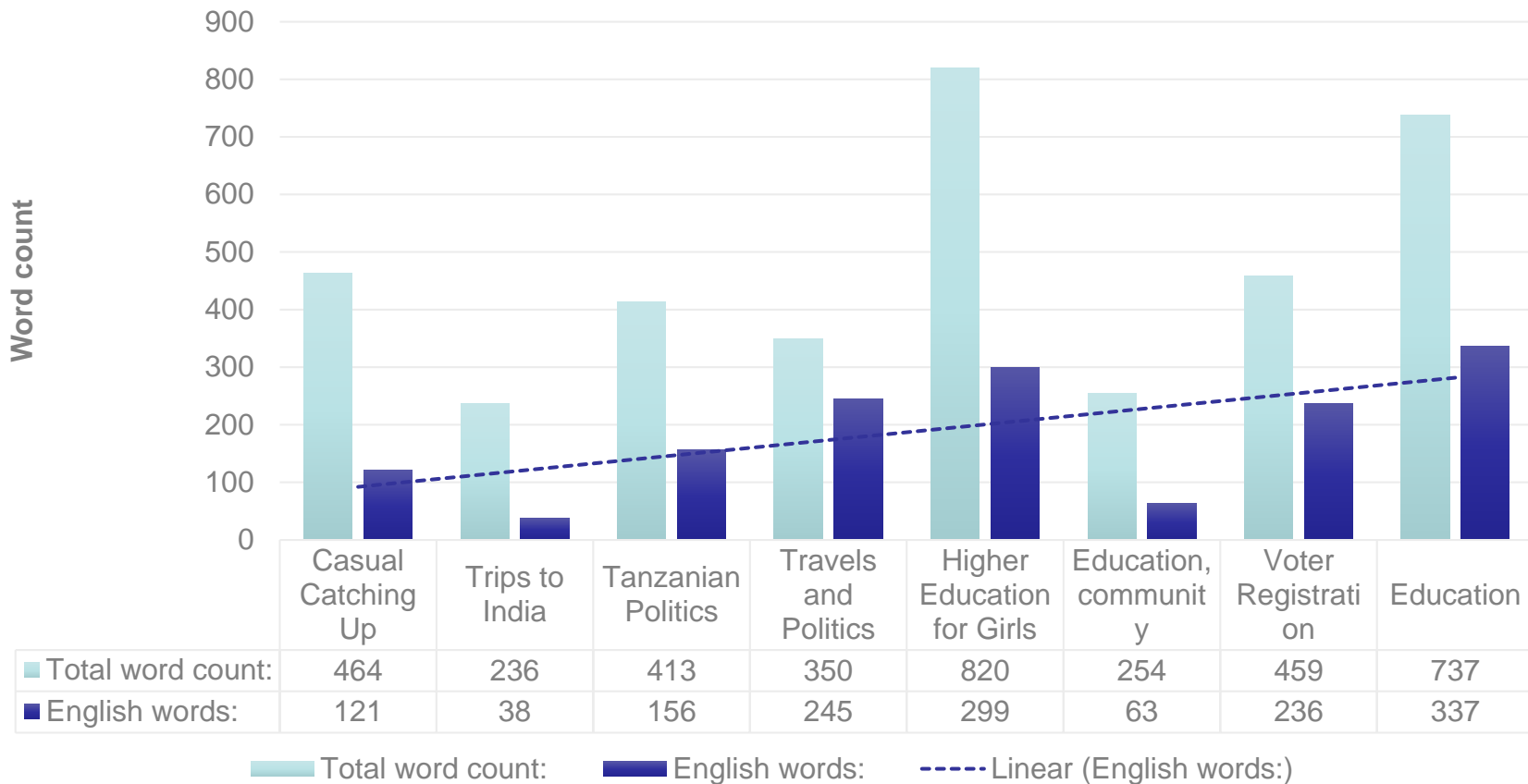




Figure 4: Depicting Trendlines





## 9. Further points

Switching at the beginning of utterances creates contrast by the speakers to keep up the pace and interest level of participants – intentionality.

**Worth noting:** English words and phrases are injected into conversations; the conversations flow with zero struggling of matching grammar to language; intrinsic knowledge of interjecting and switching languages. Cacoullos & Travis (2018) refer to this as ‘**extra-grammatical situations**’; situation is bigger than grammatical details – the conversation and meaning-making is bigger than minor details such as correct grammar.

Meanings of each sentence, interaction and conversation as a whole is communicated and understood clearly by all. There is no seeking clarification from any participant. The social creating of meaning is clear.



## Answering the research questions

### 1. Why does codeswitching happen? How is it interactionally negotiated?

Results indicate patterns that codeswitching is dependent on topic. This is due to macro-level ideologies and attitudes towards English which in turn determine micro-level linguistic behaviors ie linguistic code choices. The analysis has been conducted in such a way that, in contrast to more common, short blocks of conversation transcripts, entire blocks of speech from each participant have been inserted. This is how simply the participants spoke. Patterns of topical switching are clearly detected in larger blocks, compared to shorter texts. The diverse ways in which participants linguistically express themselves demonstrate the usage of the languages available as personal markers which function as tools in casual conversations.

### 2. How is English being used by Indian Tanzanian multilinguals in casual group interactions?

Patterns of codeswitching based on topical shifts. The RO set (Myers-Scotton, 1993) referred earlier shows here that the cue to turn to English, or revert back to Kutchi or Swahili, is based on the 'rights' of the conversation leader, so to speak. When the one who is speaking changes the language, which is based on topic, then the 'obligation' of the other participants is to, in turn, switch to English. The reasons for this are deduced to be as follows

a) To confirm and share one's identity in the conversation

Crystal, (1987) states an individual uses CS to express unity with a particular social group. (p.7) Showing shared identity builds a rapport and shows unity, which is particularly important when discussing socially relevant topics. The speakers are also the audience in turn, so it needs to be added that participants switch to identify with their audience.



## b) Speech accommodation

Gumperz (1982) claims codeswitching has a discourse function (p.13, cited in Hadei, et al, 2016, p. 123.) Speech accommodation is accommodating other speaker (s) in the communication process. In these conversations, it is evident when one participant switches to English, in order to keep the attention of the rest of the participants, they in turn accommodate the speaker and follow the momentum, sticking to English. There are numerous examples of this throughout the data sets.

Speech accommodation is tied in with identity confirmation mentioned above. Shared identity indicates a familiarity and therefore camaraderie amongst the participants, and in the case of codeswitching within the conversations - results show that nearly all participants switch to English based on topical shifts. This attitude is not uncommon; in the above cited study, Dawaele and Li Wei (2013) also state the same. 'At a very general level, CS could be regarded as an achievement strategy by language learners, an identity marker in certain communities, or a snobbish ornament amongst the elite. (p. 2).

Many Indian Tanzanians in this community believe that the better one's knowledge and skills in English, the higher the education level, which in turn is associated with prestige. In the interviews, this was stated quite bluntly, with a dose of sarcasm, 'if they speak English they show off how smart and educated they are, not like us simple people!' (Interview no. 23). This implies that having English knowledge and communicating using one's English skills reflects a sense of superiority. This is not actually the case however, as the participants interviewed state that they prefer English simply because they can communicate better in it, and express certain ideas and discuss certain topics better.



### c) Lack of facility

The term 'lack of facility' (Hadei, Kumar et al, 2016) refers to bilingual or multilingual speakers often codeswitch to the second language (L2) vocabulary to match their native language (L1) word (s). I have inserted a section here which shows a multilingual codeswitch when she is not not able to access a particular word in the language that the conversation is in.

#### Conversation 11.

Participant (15) Bai (other) **community** boi endelea thiye li ai. (are very developed.) **Canada ne (and) UK** me naaro, boi jana **equally** bhane ta ne kam job kareta. (take them, for example, both are equally educated and both work.) Chokro ne chokri, au inke herte (I will) bring up **values** thi dini, ke ee pan kik thai shage, **respect** rakhe, ne (will give them, that they can also become something, and give and command respect and) chokre (boy) ke pan, bhaneli bairi gote. Kake ini ekla ai. (I will also encourage him to find an educated woman. Because they are on their own.)

The participant does not appear to know the words in Kutchi for the codeswitched words, as these words in Kutchi are rarely used anymore, and rather English is used as a form of substitution, therefore to this speaker, she needs to draw from her 'formal' L3 in order to convey her thoughts

Myers-Scotton (1993) refers to this as 'sequential unmarked switching' (p.44). Nutrazina, Kesner, Alefirenko & Shakhputova (2019) add to this point: 'CS occurs when the speaker feels a lack of language tools in one language or has certain difficulties in expressing thoughts, he switches to another language.' (p.581).

# 10. Summary and conclusions

Code choices in a conversation depend on indexicality, which determine the rights and obligations set. The right dictates obligation, and language choices are therefore marked (intentional) and/or unmarked (unintentional).

Situational and metaphorical switching is prominent in all instances.



# 11. Linguistic Patterns.

## Linguistic patterns

English in conversations almost in entirety depends on topics. The more formal a topic, the more English used.

Li Wei (2014) and Levy, R et al (2015) discusses bilingualism & switching tied to extra-linguistic contexts which define conversational interaction for meaning making. The speakers regulate patterns based on interactions.

Insight provided into lesser explored social demographics.

Paves the way for future sociolinguistic research into language attitudes, linguistic identity and psycholinguistics.

# 12. Limitations

Top to bottom method, from macro level to micro.

## ❑ Macro limits

Sociolinguistic and general study outline limitations

Number of informants

Logistical challenges conducting field research in Tanzania

Limited time

## ❑ Micro limits

Linguistic analysis limitations

‘Conceptual limitations’

However, analyzing new data also reflects alignment to changes over time to the theories held previously, including vocabulary that was not even in existence, let alone in the lexicon in that time period.

# 13. Future outlook

## Generational range

Lowest age range is the 20-40 range. Follow up studies on preteen to early 20s; more well-versed in technology. Therefore it would be necessary to see whether including the variable of technology plays a greater role to verify my results of topical switching.

## Variationist standpoint

This field of research is still very limited re: Indian languages. Interesting to research if social class variables have any bearing on local Indian English dialect, and what linguistic variables are employed. By class differences I refer to wealthy families living in the suburbs, compared to singles living in the city.



Much more to be done in terms of language.

Kutchi is an old language, faces a decreasing number of speakers, and is not as widely known as other Indian languages.

Follow up study considering codeswitching between English and other Indian languages spoken in different urban areas may yield some fruitful results.

Expand the study into neighboring East African countries. Myers-Scotton's work has focused on East Africa, particularly in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. It would be beneficial to include Kenya and Uganda in the expansion of this study. I mention these two countries because both have notable Indian populations.



Approach the study from a psycholinguistic or anthropological perspective, in addition to the sociolinguistic approach.

The question of sociocultural identity remains important, as being multilingual in addition to being multicultural denotes certain affiliations with cultures.

The current study already provides a framework for this future question, as questionnaires with answers and transcribed interviews on sociocultural and linguistic identity exist.

Analyzing the data from interviews would seek to answer the question on self-perception.

Is the English language is indeed a linguistic bridge for members of the Indian community in East Africa?



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