

## Language Police in Code-Switching: A Case of the Language Used by Politicians in Kenya

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### Abstract

Kenya is a multilingual nation with about eighty different ethnic languages. Kenyan politicians use language as a weapon with which they woo the electorate. One way of so doing is by code switching or code mixing. This paper shows instances of code switching/code mixing while explaining why the Kenyan politicians do so as they address the electorate. In this paper, the concepts of code switching and code mixing are interchangeably used given the varied morpho-syntactic nature of all the languages in use in Kenya. Data for the paper was obtained from the University of Nairobi students who were Communication major and Sociolinguistics major. The discussions in the paper are anchored on selected tenets of Communication Accommodation Theory as espoused by Howard Giles. The paper demonstrates that Kenyan politicians code switch because of the need to be accepted by those from a particular ethnic group they are addressing at that particular time not that they are deficient in the matrix language.

**Key Words:** Multilingual, Kiswahili, English, Code Switching/Code Mixing, Politicians, Language Police.

### Introduction

Language is an integral part of human behavior for it is the primary means of interaction between people. Thus, speakers use language to convey their thoughts, feelings, intentions, and desires to other people. Through language, we learn about other people by simply looking at what they say and how they say it, and even learn about our relationship with other people through the way they react to what we say. Therefore, the uses of language and the meanings transmitted are situational, social and cultural. Situational meanings are conveyed through the forms of language that occur or are excluded in various contexts. Cultural meanings are expressed both in the symbolic senses of words and by the ways that interlocutors evaluate communicative behavior.

When situational, social, and cultural factors are considered, the apparent variation in speaking actually becomes quite systematic. Consistent patterns of speech emerge in given situations. Consistent cultural norms are used to interpret communicative behavior. The paper, therefore, demonstrates how Kenya's linguistic diversity relates to language use in the society for the purpose of inter ethnic communication through the use of code switching. This paper sets out to uncover the possible motivation behind code switching by Kenyan politicians. The author analysed code switching and code mixing as bilingual and or multilingual conversational strategies as it treats language as an organizational tool. The author delves into instances of code switching out of the realization that Kenya is a multilingual country. Besides, Kenyan language situation and language policy as stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya (2010) recognize both Kiswahili and English as the official languages with Kiswahili retaining its position and status as the national language. Further, the language policy in Kenya supports linguistic diversity and recommends the promotion, development, and use of indigenous languages within the communities in Kenya. There are two types of code switch: situational and metaphorical code switching (Wei 2003; Kementchedjhieva 2016) but for purposes of the present paper, their distinctions do not concern us.

### **Methodology**

The paper used purposive sampling where subjects were handpicked from the accessible population depending on their willingness to participate in the study. Although University of Nairobi students were used as samples in this study, only Communication major and Sociolinguistics major were purposively used because they were more likely to benefit from the study. Lecturers teaching Communication Studies and Sociolinguistics at the University of Nairobi were consulted to identify and recruit potential participants in the study. The researcher was in turn very respectful and responsive to the advice of the lecturers that were concerned with the teaching of the two subject majors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Education and External Studies at the University of Nairobi.

This paper used purposive sampling procedure in recruiting the subjects for the study. A total of 30 subjects were used for the study. By the use of a questionnaire, the study data was obtained by a direct person-to-person interview although for those who could not be found physically, the study used telephone interviews. The recruitment procedure used involved personal phone calls, follow-up phone calls and provision of incentives whereby those who agreed to be subjects would benefit from a cup of tea or coffee during the one-on-one interviews. The questionnaire used for the present study was in both English and Kiswahili such that respondents were free to chose the questionnaire that was presented in a language they were comfortable in. The decision to use both

languages arose from the fact that the two languages are used in the teaching of Communication and Sociolinguistics courses at the University of Nairobi. Open ended questions that were carefully constructed were used; whenever the researcher felt the responses were not satisfactory, follow-up questions were asked. As a Kenyan and a student of Sociolinguistics, participant observation was also used as a way of data collection. Data that was collected was analysed using simple statistical procedure that gave the study percentage value regarding the reasons that drive Kenyan politicians to code switch and/or code mix when addressing their electorate from varied social groups and ethnic backgrounds. The result of the data collected is reported in the result section followed by a discussion on the same in the discussion section.

### **Theory**

The study employed Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) by Giles (1979, 2009). This is one of the Sociological theories that explain certain phenomenal facts about the social world that are related besides coming up with various aspects that predict future events. Basically, this theory is about the act of shifting ones linguistic behavior in order to gain social approval of sorts in what is called linguistic convergence behavior that is the opposite of linguistic divergence behavior. Giles and Coupland (1991) define accommodation as a multiply-organised and contextually complex set of alternatives regularly available to communicators in face to face talk.

While applying CAT in the present study, we noted that the theory has been used to explain differences in language choice like is the case in the use of one language to include or to exclude others. This theory holds that speakers adjust their speaking style in order to gain social approval other than achieving greater communication effectiveness ( Devito 2003). In this case therefore, the code we choose to use on a given occasion indicates how we wish others to view us. Thus, having the knowledge of many codes is an added advantage over those who lack such ability and knowledge. Code switching helps in making one linguistically flexible, besides showing openness, and establishing a common linguistic ground. A speaker who can code switch can access different identities and accommodate other people. It is in this sense that CAT has been applied in the present study.

### **Results**

The study has ascertained the reasons for code switching by Kenyan politicians as reported by the respondents used for the study. Kenyan politicians find themselves code switching because the country is multilingual. Over 90% of the respondents held this view. This view is in line with Whiteley (1974) who viewed Kenya as a multilingual country that shares the same characteristics with other multilingual communities. Thus, code switching is a widespread phenomenon in Kenya's multilingual society and it is almost a daily occurrence that allows

bilingual and multilingual Kenyans to communicate in their day to day conversation in more than one language. This observation by the study's respondents implies that code switching or code mixing can only take place where participants are bilingual or multilingual – a case that obtains in Kenya. Appel and Muysken (1987) observe that many Kenyans, especially those living in the urban areas are multilingual since urban areas are places of convergence for people of various ethnic groups. For this reason, a majority of Kenyans speak Kiswahili, English, and an indigenous languages.

Another reason given by respondents indicates that speakers in a conversation code switch or code mix between codes whenever they wish to include or exclude an audience or a person. This was the second highly rated reason as to why people engaging in a conversation code switch or code mix as articulated by the study's respondents. Thus, code switching is a conversational strategy used to establish or to destroy group boundaries. A typical example for inclusion given had to do with a visitor joining a group in a discussion. If the visitor does not share into the original language of the conversation, the participants will have to switch to a language the visitor understands in order to accommodate him or her. On the other hand, it was observed that, if the visitor is unwanted, the conversation would continue in a tongue the visitor does not comprehend just to show that he or she is unwanted and so excluded from the conversation. In line with this exclusionist strategy, one respondent rightly used a Swahili expression to the effect that *Akufukuzaye hakwambii toka!* meaning he who doesn't want you will never tell you to leave. Instead, you will learn from his actions. In the Kenyan political context, it was observed that some politician switch to the dominant language of the constituency just to exclude the minority who may not be native to the area. About 94% of the respondents had this view as they quoted several Kenyan politicians at all levels of politics.

The third reason given for code switching in the Kenyan political context has to do with the establishment of group solidarity. This factor was majorly associated with the Kenyan political elite when interacting with the masses. Thus, it clearly came out that code switching is a communication strategy aimed at establishing group solidarity. An example given by respondents and which we felt was convincing enough was that of the former Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, who is not a Muslim dressing in Islamic gowns whenever he goes to join Muslim faithful at the Kenyan coast during festivities like Idd and Ramadan. In this context, the dressing is seen as body and non-verbal language. In line with this reason also was Pope Paul's concluding remarks when he visited Kenya in 2016 when he said *Mungu ibariki Kenya*. Such remarks coming in a speech that was written and read in English can only serve a specific purpose and which to the respondents is identifying with a particular social group who in this case are Kenyans at large given that Swahili is Kenya's national lingua franca. Thus, code

switching and code mixing helps one to identify with a particular social group in order to fit in with those around. This is a conversational strategy that can be called the “we type” solidarity and that gives rise to in-groups thereby excluding the out-groups and eliminating them in conversational participation.

Code switching and code mixing are used in the Kenyan political context as a way of showing off. As it was confessed by respondents (over 60%) and of both gender, code switching and mixing are done by people who will want those around them to know that they are been- tos and so know an extra language. in this case, respondents noted, the speakers do not give a damn whether the audience is following the conversation or not. In this age and time where there is free education provided by the Kenya government up to high school level, this kind of linguistic behavior was said to be prominent in remote villages in the country side. Besides, it was reported by respondents that people who are mobile either socio-economically or geographically will code switch and code mix either intentionally or otherwise. This observation is in line with Myers-Scotton (1993) thinking that in Africa, of which Kenya is a part, people undergoing education find it inevitable to learn the official language which is used as a medium of instruction in school. Thus, there is a direct relationship between code switching or mixing with the level of education meaning that the more one is educated, the more he or she will be able to code switch or mix due to the command in more than one language. As it was rightly put, although knowledge of English and Kiswahili is mandatory for those seeking political office in Kenya this policy is never adhered to. Every part of the country chooses who to politically represent them and this caused linguistic show off or even linguistic embarrassment. The case of an illiterate Member of the County Assembly from Turkana was adversely quoted by the study respondents with this view on code switching.

It was also noted that code switching and mixing are done by Kenyans in order to express or convey attitudes and other emotions. One respondent said that it was common to hear Kenyans politicians who are upset saying *I don't like ujinga*. In the quoted phrase, the speaker has an attitude that the spoken to is foolish and this may have arisen from the fact that the speaker is annoyed by the actions of the spoken to or that the spoken to has continuously been making mistakes which has made the speaker develop an attitude. In the same vein, Kenyan politicians who have a positive attitude towards an ethnic group will learn and even use the language of the ethnic group. Some politicians, it was reported by some respondents, even adopt names from other ethnic groups.

To some respondents, change or switch in language from one to another has to do with change or swift in ideology. Ideology shapes the beliefs of the people and this is only articulated through a channel of communication – language. English has historically been Kenya's sole official language since the colonial times up until 2010 when Kiswahili was declared an official language also. This

means that in any official context in Kenya, one can choose to use either language or even both languages in turns. Thus, the 2010 Kenya Constitution allows Kenyans to code switch or code mix in official contexts. From respondents, therefore, the Kibaki administration in Kenya marked a big ideological difference between his reign and the previous regimes. This observation was held by mostly graduate Communication and Sociolinguistics students due to the complexity involved in the thought of the linguistic action that goes with language policy and planning issues.

Code-switching is also meant to emphasize a point that a speaker is communicating. Respondents referred to the kind of language used by Kenya's Deputy President, William Ruto. Whenever he is addressing Kenyans, respondents noted, regardless of the language, he switches to Kiswahili and asks: *Ama vipi jameni?* The switch to Kiswahili is meant to emphasize a point that the speaker was making in the base language. In such a case, code switching is meant to increase impact of the speech or to clarify a point. 60% of the respondents had this view regarding why Kenyan politicians code switch.

Those in the Kenyan speech community who have linguistic deficiencies but are politicians, code switch in order to fill a linguistic or conceptual gap due to lack of competence in the base language (see Weinreich 1953; Gumperz 1982). One respondent confessed that she is multilingual but when she does not easily find a suitable word to describe a concept she code switches to necessitate the conversation. It was further noted that inability of expression is enhanced by code switching and code mixing which provides continuity of speech thereby compensating for the deficiency. The lexical deficiencies noted for code switching and code mixing may also serve other communication strategies which are that of identity and exclusion. Thus, code switching and code mixing allow ethnic identity where members of the same ethnic group do so to exclude non ethnic participants. It was noted that when a speaker says "*Buy me some muratina in Dubai*", the mention of "*Muratina*" – a traditional Kikuyu drink will exclude those who do not comprehend Kikuyu language. The same may be said of a famous politician in the Moi regime who could only comprehend Kikuyu language and so anytime the University of Nairobi students demanded to dialogue with the government he thought they were asking for bread. This is an observation that was made by respondents who are mainly in the boarding section of the university and who were of both gender.

Code switching is used in the Kenyan context when one is quoting another person verbatim. Respondents, by giving examples of the switching from English to Kiswahili, noted that when a speaker quotes another person's speech, gives a popular proverb, or makes one's own quotation, code switching or mixing is involved. A statement like this was given to reinforce the point of code switching due to quoting: "You know the Swahili proverb that says 'Adui mpende ...'"

...exactly that”. Besides the speaker code switching or mixing to show a direct quotation, the code switching serves another communicative function – that of creating more impact to the audience. Although this point was given by some respondents as a cause for code switching, they could not mention any single Kenyan politician who uses this as a communication strategy.

While quoting Kenya’s Fourth president, Mwai Kibaki, and popular Kenyan radio and television comedians like the late Ojwang of Vitimbi group some respondents (30%) noted that code mixing and switching can be used as a source of humour. Thus, code switching from English to Kiswahili by Mwai Kibaki was for fun. Kibaki would say, “You do not behave like that, pumbavu... no that cant be ...*some people ni bure kabisa*”. He was also fond of giving speeches in English but would be heard inserting Kiswahili words like *pale pale* meaning engaging in sexual acts. Such statements by this retired Kenyan president would leave people laughing and not much more. The code switching or mixing was for humour and fun.

Code switching and code mixing are used by Kenyan politicians as a communication strategy so as to say things as if they are not. Put in other words, Kenyan politicians use other tongues other than their own in order not to hurt their immediate audience by use of euphemisms. A respondent from the Embu ethnic group said that when a speaker wants to avoid obscene or offensive words in a gathering like a political rally, he or she avoids them by using those of other languages. This is when one says: “*Mundu ndangithua buttocks andu makionaga*”, meaning You do not scratch your buttocks in public. Here, to avoid mentioning private parts in ones mother tongue, he or she introduces the English word in order to reduce the linguistic and social damage that may have been caused. On the same note, it was noted that when Kenyans were being enlightened on the danger of HIV-AIDS by the political leadership, use of such taboo words such as fuck, penis, and vagina were not well received by Kenyans especially when articulated in the mother tongue. However, when Kiswahili or English were used the receivership was overwhelming. Here again, the issue of code switching or mixing is used to euphemize taboo words.

Another factor that was noted for code switching and mixing in the Kenyan politico-linguistic context is that of the need to appeal to both the literate and illiterate in the society. During national and international celebrations, Kenya’s political leadership that is elitist in the sense that it took over leadership from the colonialists for they shared some traits gives its address to the nation in the English language. After giving an address in English, the political leadership switches to Kiswahili for the good and benefit of the majority illiterate Kenyans. In this case therefore, the political leadership switches to Kiswahili from English so as to appeal to both the literate and illiterate. Another example given is that of the use of the term “Laptops” instead of “Vipakatalishi”, in the following

Kiswahili sentence: Watoto wote ni lazima wawe na Laptops shuleni. In the above sentence not many Kenyans are literate in Kiswahili as to know that Kipakatalishi is the equivalent of Laptop. Here, code switching or mixing ensures adequate transfer of meaning. About 30% of respondents had this view on code-switching.

From the study respondents, it was noted that in the Kenyan context, linguistic diversity, especially among politicians and their electorates, fosters mutual respect. Linguistic diversity teaches Kenyans the importance of learning to live with each other in harmony. Through language diversity, Kenyans learn about the culture of other linguistic groups in the country and so start appreciating them although they are not similar to theirs. Thus, through linguistic diversity, Kenyans are enabled to move beyond narrow mind set and so become more creative and intelligent than homogenous groups that linguistically and culturally live in isolation. Quoting Kenyan handshake phenomenon between President Uhuru Kenyatta and Opposition leader Raila Odinga, one respondent observed that it has unified the country like never before because there is mutual respect among all Kenyans regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Lastly, respondents also noted that code switching and mixing is used by Kenyan politicians to facilitate gossip and confidentiality. This happens when the participants in a communication want to exclude some listeners and talk about something secretive. One Kenyan politician was quoted as having used his mother tongue to negatively talk about another ethnic group using the following statement: 'I do hate *andu eriari* so much', meaning 'I do hate people from the lakeside so much'. From this example, people can spread gossip by using a language that the target group does not understand. In this same example, code switching and code mixing is used for confidentiality. In the above mentioned example, the speaker switched code to say something that he considered confidential and not meant for the entire Kenyan public. This observation by the respondents finds itself on a kind of continuum with the one on stereotypes and attitudes. We can therefore say that some Kenyan politicians code switch for they have a fixed impression of certain groups of Kenyans.

From the study's results, it is evident that code switching and code mixing are communication strategies that are in common usage by politicians in Kenya. Thus, code switching and code mixing are in Kenya meant to serve specific communicative strategies revealed above. In a nutshell, code switching and code mixing is a conversational strategy enhanced by the fact that speakers are bilingual or multilingual. Code switching and code mixing can be beneficial in language teaching and in classroom activities. Although code switching and code mixing by some politicians may be considered as an incompetency in language, it is natural and can be turned to a purposeful and useful language activity as witnessed by the results and findings of the present research.



### **Discussion of Results**

Kenya is a land of multiple languages and so we can be justified to say that it is a country in linguistic diversity and by extension cultural diversity. As part of culture, language helps people to remain together and to do things they could not have done as individuals. In Kenya, besides Kiswahili and English, there are many other languages but the two languages are the connecting languages among Kenyans of diverse cultures and languages. In spite of the differences Kenyans speak, they are committed to their motherland as one country and this is one of the reasons Kenyans code switch and code mix. In Kenya highly sociable and extroverted politicians code switch more as a way of building a network of supportive others than the less sociable and introverted politicians. From the study findings, it was also noted that male politicians code switch more compared to their female counter-parts. In fact, the only instances where female politicians were noted code switch was from English to Kiswahili and vice versa.

The goal of a politician during any political gathering is to gain acceptance or support. The politician achieves this through persuasion and oratory as well as exciting laughter and pain at the same time. They therefore have to speak the language of the audience at some point by code switching and code mixing for the reason of being humorous. This could be the reason why some Kenyan comedians have acted the roles of Kenyan presidents like Moi and Kibaki, and even other political leaders like Raila causing a lot of laughter to the audiences. The code switching that aims to gain acceptance or support by exciting the audience occurs more in large groups than in small groups. On the basis of this, the politician can weigh whether the crowd is supportive of the code switching or not and this in turn makes him or her to know whether to continue code switching or not.

When one switches from the base language to another, this kind of linguistic behavior demonstrates to the audience that s/he values their speech community. In return, the person switching or code mixing expects acceptance and a warm welcome or reception from the audience. This will explain why whenever Kenya's former Prime Minister Raila Odinga is addressing gatherings in Western Kenya, he greets them in the Luhya language. This is when we talk of language unite. When language unites, it logically follows that language can also divide. This is when we talk of code switching and code mixing as exclusion tool. When people do not want other people to understand what is being said, they code switch or code mix so as to deny them an opportunity of knowing whatever is being said. This kind of code switching is most likely to occur in competitive than in non-competitive political situations. Thus, code switching, in a country like Kenya where people vote along ethnic line, is likely to occur in environments that are ethnically and linguistically foreign to a politician.

From the result of the study, respondents noted that code switching or code mixing is done in order to quote verbatim by showing the original source of the statement. Thus, code switching is done to show originality. Some languages are associated with various societal acts and disciplines. For example a Luhya speaker from Mumias who joins the Islamic faith, will communicate using Luhya language while at home but when he goes to pray in a Mosque he will be heard speaking in Arabic. Arabic will be used while in the Mosque because all Muslim faithful believe this is the language in which Prophet Mohammed originally preached. The same code switching will be done by a Luo speaking professor of Engineering. While at home, he will communicate with his family using Dholuo but when he gets to a lecture theatre he will switch code to English because that is the official Engineering teaching language besides being the language the discipline was passed down to him from his professors. The same was seen in Kenyan political speeches. When applied, such code switching had an affective dimension in the sense that carried symbolic meaning and was deliberately applied to fit the message intended.

A politician or any other person who is bilingual or multilingual, when addressing people from his or her own ethnic group may revert to his or her mother tongue to fire up the emotions of his or her people against other communities. During the hunt for votes when elections are due, incitement is done so as to lock out those opponents from other ethnic groups and who do not share the same language. In Kenya, people have been taken to court for what the Kaparo led commission on national integration has called hate speech and which has been made in local Kenyan language courtesy of code switching or code mixing. From this, we can argue that code switching and code mixing are agents that communicators use to perpetuate tribalism especially in a highly ethnicized country like Kenya where even political parties are largely ethnic based. In this case, politicians are more likely to code switch when talking about sensitive issues than those that are not sensitive. Thus, politicians will tend to code switch if they are talking about an issue that will reflect negatively on other politicians than when it will reflect positively on them.

In some cases, code switching and code mixing are done by Kenyan politicians as a strategy to win the trust of a particular targeted audience. In the result section, we did mention that some respondents looked at code switching and mixing as a mark of in-group as opposed to out-group. This is in line with the concept of trust. Kenya had Peter Kenneth as a Presidential candidate in 2017. As a presidential candidate, Peter Kenneth had *Tunawesmake* as his slogan. This slogan code mixes three languages in use in Kenya but using the morpho-syntactic structure of Kiswahili. The three languages are Kiswahili, English and a Kenyan slang called Sheng. The use of Sheng in the above mixed code was meant to capture support from the youth and who are the majority among Kenyan

registered voters. Winning the trust of the youth would definitely enable Peter Kenneth to make it to the State House because statistics shows the youth as being the majority registered voters in Kenya. In this case therefore, code switching was meant to get the politician gaining social approval from the audience.

In a multilingual setting like the one obtaining in Kenya, code switching and mixing enhances support by the audience. Given the relationship between language and culture, code switching and mixing may even go beyond language to matters of artifact and culture. For example, politicians addressing the Kalenjin audience would be clothed in traditional Kalenjin attire and be served sour milk from a gourd as a sign of readiness of the audience to support them fully. In this case, non verbal language will be mixed with verbal to drive a point that you are ours and so feel at home.

Sympathy can be enhanced through the use of code switching and code mixing. A politician who is desperately seeking support and acceptance from an audience may attempt speaking in the language of the audience in order to get sympathy and acceptance from the audience. In the Orange Democratic Movement in Kenya, the de facto party leader is Raila Odinga – a Luo but the chairman is John Mbadi – a Suba. For Mbadi to get full support from the region, he has to speak Dholuo but Raila is not under any obligation to speak Olusuba. Therefore, Mbadi has to switch codes from Olusuba to Dholuo to enhance sympathy. The same can be said of the NASA political party in Kenya where the leader – Mr. Odinga used the slogan *Tibim Tialala* from his mother tongue and all Kenyans from other ethnic groups who were associating with him had no option but to use it. They were seeking political sympathy.

People engaging in a conversation may code switch or code mix due to lack of knowledge of any other language. Alternatively, one may code switch or code mix because the audience may not know any other language. For example, when two people are engaged in a conversation and then a third one joins them but does not comprehend the original language of communication, they will be forced to switch the code to accommodate him or her. Another example would be a cultural group like Njuri Njeke from Meru that comprises native Meru speakers without regard to whether they went to school or not. Such a group of people transact their business in Meru language and some of their terminology cannot have English or Kiswahili equivalents or translations. This becomes a recipe for code switching and code mixing when being addressed by Kenyan politicians who may be in need of their blessings.

Some people engaged in conversation may code switch or code mix in order to evoke various interpretations. This leaves room for politicians and other language users to say they were quoted out of context because of the ambiguous nature of the words or the phrases. This is particularly true in the multilingual

context like the one obtaining in Kenya. In multilingual settings, the cultural elements unique to a particular ethnic group shape the group's world view. A group's world view can only be interpreted in the context of the group and using words, phrases and sentences from such an ethnic group can only give rise to various and varied interpretations. This is one of the reasons why people code switch and code mix in political conversations in Kenya.

From the results of the study, it comes out clearly that code switching and code mixing is used by politicians for prestigious purposes. Thus, people code switch and code mix just to show off that they can speak the language of the people who matter. This may be influenced by the prestigious status or nature of that particular language. Mbara (2013) while talking about attitudes of the Suba towards Dholuo says the prestige given to Dholuo is what drives the Abasuba speakers to abandon their language for Dholuo. This in itself means that when the Olusuba speakers code switch to Dholuo, they do so as a way of showing off. The same can be said of people who speak foreign languages and where the audience cannot follow and comprehend whatever is being said. In such a case, Kenyan politicians code switch as a way of creating their own linguistic identity. This may also be done by rude politicians so as to distance themselves from their audience.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the present investigation, it is clear that Kenyan politicians have various reasons why they code switch and code mix and these reasons are situation specific besides varying in terms of intensity and frequency of usage. These reasons range from the need to be accepted to just showing off because of the status and prestige accorded a particular language at that particular time and the present audience. Kenyan politicians code switch mainly for the reward that they stand to gain from the electorate. Code switching by Kenyan politicians results in promoting deep relationship with the audience. As such, code switching is a highly conscious and deliberate undertaking. Therefore, those of us who believe in linguistic purity and linguistic policemenhip will begin to appreciate language usage by Kenyan politicians.

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