Conversation Analysis: Creation of Social Identity Among Ha Speakers

Adronis Kanonko Selestino, The University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Abstract

Social identity is a complex construct that is continually shaped and reshaped through interactions, including casual conversations. It is during these seemingly inconsequential exchanges that individuals negotiate and create their social identity, often subconsciously. In the discursive negotiations of the creation of social identity, various conversational features are employed. This paper explores the features that Ha speakers use to create social identities by adopting a qualitative approach with which it uses ethnographic design to collect the data. The data gathered were casual conversations. It qualitatively analysed the conversations captured from different contexts to find out how interactants use conversation as a resource to create their social identities. The findings of this paper include a range of interactional devices that Ha speakers employ to create their social identities. These include repair mechanisms, distribution of turns, turn length, code switching and code mixing, membership categorisation, and unfolding of the assumed silent great social identity. The paper demonstrates how interactional devices used in conversations are potential resources when the user of the language is socialised to use them intentionally to gain an advantage over the conversational counterpart. The paper recommends that, since the interactional devices are potential resources that can be used profitably to gain an advantage from the conversational counterpart or an audience, they should be exposed and interactively socialised to the members of the society from childhood.

Keywords: conversation analysis, social identity, Ha, social practice, conversation as a resource.

1 Introduction

Conversation is a form of interactive, spontaneous communication between two or more people who follow rules of etiquette (Clark 1996). Conversation can either be pragmatic or casual. Casual conversation, as defined functionally and in a way negatively by Eggins and Slade (1997), refers to talk that is not motivated by any clear pragmatic purpose. In the words of Levinson, quoted in Hakulinen (2009), conversation is the predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings.

What all forms of conversation share, however, is the fact that it is through them that we, as human beings, manage our daily affairs and construct and make sense of our lives and activities. In this sense, Gardener (1999: 264) observes that

> Ordinary conversation is the default version of the talk (and by implication perhaps of language too), and all other forms of talk-in-interaction are derived from ordinary conversation, and are; thus, culturally, and socially, restricted. For example, modes of talk in education, in law, in the media, and medicine, are likely to be derived from local (cultural) needs and contingencies, and adaptations of talk encompass these.

This observation by Gardner reveals the sense that, from a casual conversation, one can access the hidden treasure of beliefs, customs, and traditions of a particular language community. This is because even a person with whatever disability who can at least speak has an avenue to deposit their cultural intents into their language community reservoir.

In the scenario that other forms of talk in interaction can perform different functions of a language like the referential function, the directive function, the expressive function, the phatic function, the metalinguistic function, and the poetic function, Appel and Muysken (1987), this paper tries to present the view that casual conversation may be used as a resource to perform some social functions one of them being to create social identity. Conversation performs this by the use of different interactional features, referred to as fundamental structures by Far (2008).

Far (2008) worked on conversation. He made an analytical study of casual conversation to find out fundamental structures and notions in a talk-in-interaction. After analysing many conversations, he found that the fundamental structures and notions of a conversation include: turn-taking, overlap, repair, and discourse markers. The observations by Far underlie what Mazeland (2006) states when he defines conversation analysis,

> Conversation analysis studies the methods participants orient to when they organize social action through talk. It investigates rules and practices from an interactional perspective and studies them by examining recordings of real-life interactions.

The social action practices referred to by Mazeland may refer to the discursive negotiations of creating social identities made by conversational interactants knowingly or unknowingly. Sacks et al (1974) also studied conversation extensively to examine the organization of turn-taking. The findings of their study presented a landmark contribution in the field of Conversation Analysis. They proposed a model for organising turn-taking organization in conversation, which is summarised below.

The model has two parts, a “turn-constructional component” and a “turn-allocational component.” A turn may be constructed from various syntactic units: it may, for instance, consist of a word, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence. Once an utterance is underway, it should be possible for hearers to guess which unit the speaker is using, and in this way, judge the utterance when it is complete. The first possible completion point of an utterance is called a “transition-relevance place,” since, when this point is reached, the turn is reallocated and may pass on to a new speaker.

The allocation of turn proceeds is as follows. The current speaker may, if he or she wishes, choose the next speaker by using his present utterance a “current-speaker-selects-next” technique, such as an addressed question. This method of allocating the turn has precedence over the others. If the current speaker does not use this option, the other participants may “self-select” by beginning utterances of their own, the first person to speak up acquiring the turn. Finally, if the other participants let this opportunity pass, the previous speaker may, if desired, take another turn. In this case, the same turn-allocation procedure occurs at the next transition-relevance place, until, eventually, the turn is transferred to another participant.

The turn-constructional and turn-allocational components constitute the basic system. In addition, however, Sacks et al. (1974) describe some “repair mechanisms” which come into operation when the basic system breaks down. The commonest problem is a multiple start during self-selection; this is repaired by the abortion of all but one of the overlapping utterances. Another problem is that the first person to speak up during self-selection may

preempt an utterance of higher priority. In such cases, “second-starter techniques” are used - in other words, the first speaker is interrupted.

The model was examined for its compatibility with a list of grossly observable facts about conversation. The results of the examination suggested that a model for turn-taking in conversation would be characterized as locally managed, partly administered, interactionally controlled, and sensitive to recipient design.

The study presented that a model should be capable of accommodating the following actualities, which they observed in any conversation.

> Speaker-change recurs, or at least occurs;
> Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time;
> Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief;
> Transitions (from one turn to another) with no gap and no overlap are common. Together with transitions characterized by slight gaps or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions;
> Turn order is not fixed, but varies;
> Turn size is not fixed, but varies;
> The length of the conversation is not specified in advance;
> What participants say is not specified in advance;
> Relative distribution of turns is not specified in advance;
> The number of participants can vary;
> Talk can be continuous or discontinuous;
> Turn-allocation techniques are used. A current speaker may select a next speaker (as when he addresses a question to another party), or participants may self-select by starting to talk;
> Various “turn-constructional units” are employed; e.g., turns can be of just one word, or they can be sentential in length;
> Repair mechanisms exist for dealing with turn-taking errors and violations, if two participants find themselves talking at the same time, one of them will stop prematurely, thus repairing the trouble.

The works discussed above have revealed the efforts of scholars to investigate the features or structures of a conversation. And they have been presented thereof. This paper intends to look at how these structures are discursively used to negotiate for the creation of the desired social identities of the participants in conversations in light of the views by Eggins and Slade (1997: 6, 9) that: (a) Casual conversation is concerned with the joint construction of social reality and (b) In casual conversation we see language being used as a resource to negotiate social identity and interpersonal relations.

Therefore, because of the scholarly works discussed above, this paper strives to achieve the following two objectives.

i. To find out the interactional features used in conversation to create social identities among Ha speakers;
ii. To explore how the interactional features (observed in (i)) are used to create social identities in conversation among Ha speakers.

1.1 Ha language

Ha is a Bantu language spoken in Kigoma Region in Western Tanzania. It is classified by Guthrie (1971) under Rundi-Rwanda D 60 as one of the Great Lakes Bantu Languages or Lacustrine Bantu. Rwanda-Rundi D 60 comprises the following languages: Nyarwanda, Rundi, Shubi, Hangaza, Ha, and Vinza. It is one of the 135 living languages of Tanzania (Grimes & Grimes 2000). Ha language is closely related to other languages like Rundi (spoken in Burundi), Nyarwanda (spoken in Rwanda), and Hangaza (spoken in some areas of the Kagera Region of Tanzania). These four languages (Ha, Rundi, Nyarwanda, and Hangaza) are, sometimes, referred to as four dialects of the same language (Kimenyi 1978:1). According to Kimenyi (1978:1), as a single language, Ha would rank second, after Kiswahili, among the Bantu languages, concerning a number of speakers. However, the Ha speakers themselves consider Ha to be a language different from Rundi and Nyarwanda.

2 Theoretical framework

This paper was guided by the *Systemic Functional Linguistics: A Functional-semantic Interpretation of Conversation theory.* The theory was developed by M.A.K. Halliday in the U.K. during the 1960s (1973, 1975, 1978, 1994, and Halliday and Hasan 1985). An important influence of the approach to analysing casual conversation is based on the model of "language as social semiotic." This theory offers the basic benefits for conversational analysis as presented by Eggins and Slade (1997: 47)

> It theorizes the links between language and social life so that conversation can be approached as a way of doing social life. More specifically, casual conversation can be analysed as involving different linguistic patterns which both enact and construct dimensions of social identity and interpersonal relations.

The approach views language as a resource for making not just one meaning at a time, but several strands of meaning simultaneously. These simultaneous layers of meaning can be identified in linguistic units of all sizes: in the word, phrase, clause, sentence, and text. This means that a casual conversation is modelled as the simultaneous exchange of three types of meanings. These three types of meanings can be glossed as follows: ideational meanings, interpersonal meanings, and textual meanings.

As there are different strands of meanings being enacted in talk, the analyst needs to analyse the talk from different perspectives. Thus, different analytical techniques are used to uncover each strand of meaning. For example, to explore the ideational meaning in a text, the analyst focuses on patterns which encode the who, when, where, why, and how of a text, Eggins and Slade (1997: 49).

Therefore, a study of casual conversation can explore all three dimensions of casual talk. However, for theoretical reasons, this paper focuses on the analysis of interpersonal meanings in casual conversation. The paper offers the following two reasons for this focus. First, the paper stands to argue that the primary task of casual conversation is the negotiation of social identity and social relations. Thus, casual conversation is "driven" by interpersonal, rather than ideational or textual meanings.

Second, it is the open-ended, turn-taking organization of conversation that differentiates it from other linguistic activities (Sacks et al. 1974). This turn-by-turn structuring of

conversation is realized through interpersonal patterns of mood and conversational structure. Given this approach, therefore, conversational utterances in all the excerpts included in this paper will be analysed to find out how they shape social life in a way that the participants negotiate to create their social identities.

3 Research methodology

This paper used a qualitative research approach. It employed a qualitative research approach primarily because its main intention is to collect conversations of Ha speakers to determine how they use interactional features to construct their social reality. The paper also employed an ethnographic research design, which involves the study of real-life situations within their natural environment. Hence, the researcher observed people in the settings in which they live by participating in their day-to-day activities.

The design enabled the researcher, while living with the target community, to record naturally occurring conversational data of casual conversations from two purposively selected districts of the Kigoma Region: Kibondo and Kasulu. From the two districts naturally occurring casual conversations were recorded. Conversations were observed and recorded in four distinct domains, which were the friendship domain, economy domain, home domain, and business domain. These were obtained in different locations like homes, marketplaces, rest places, business centers and social ceremonies. The conversational occasions involved three contexts concerning sex: men only, women only, and men and women together engaged in conversation. From the context delineated above, five conversations were collected and have been used in this paper as follows: one conversation was used under the repair mechanism and distribution of number of turns, the two subsections of section four, and the remaining four conversations were used in the subsequent four subsections of section four. Because this method could not capture all the necessary information required for this paper, another method was used to supplement it. In this case, direct observation of participants in conversation was also used.

Data analysis was divided into three major phases. In the first phase, all the recorded data were transcribed. In the second phase, those parts of the excerpts that were identified to be relevant to be presented in the paper as supporting pieces of evidence were translated into English. In the third phase, the data were scrutinized to find out those interactional features that were used to create social identities among Ha speakers in casual conversations.

4 Findings

The findings revealed how conversation functions as a resource to negotiate the creation of social identity among Ha speakers. The concept of the creation of social identity as presented by Bauman and Briggs (1990) and Zimmerman and Wieder (1970) is a process that goes through three social phases. The first phase is presented by Bauman and Briggs (1990), who stipulate that social identity takes place in concrete and specific interactional occasions. It is also presented in other words by Zimmerman and Wieder (1970) that it entails “discursive work.” The second phase is also presented by Bauman and Briggs (1990) that which yields constellations of identities instead of individual or monolithic constructs. The last phase is also presented by Bauman and Briggs (1990) that it does not simply emanating from the individual,

but results from processes of negotiation. Having analysed the data, the interactional features that were found to underlie the process are presented and discussed.

4.1 Repair mechanism

Repair mechanism is a term used in conversational analysis and discourse analysis to refer to the attempt made by participants in a conversation to make good or real and imagined deficiency in the interaction (Crystal 1985). Schegloff et al. (1977) define repair as a mechanism dealing with problems concerning speaking, hearing, and understanding in talk-in-interactions. And Schiffrin (1987) defines repair as a speech activity during which speakers locate and replace a prior information unit. Because they focus on prior information, repairs achieve information transitions anaphorically (forcing speakers to adjust their orientation to what has been said before and respond to it in upcoming talks). She, further, argues that almost anything that anyone says is subjected to repair either by the speaker himself or herself or by the listener.

The repair mechanism as an interactional feature is used to create social identity in its different forms, such as corrections, clarifications, restatements, and emphases. Parts of conversations containing repair works are incorporated in this section to substantiate how a conversation is used by participants as a resource to create social identity among the interactants.

Example:
The conversation took place in a public bar. The participants included a young boy, Funzi, who is a primary school leaver, his friend Toma, and their former primary school teacher. The bar attendant also participated in the conversation.

In the exchange below, Funzi and his friend Toma met their former primary school teacher. Funzi quickly started to befriend him. He bought some local beer and welcomed him to join them. His teacher joined them. From this new relationship that Funzi has achieved, Funzi wants to be given the respect that is equivalent to what is rendered by the bar attendant to his former primary school teacher, a government employee. This is what it means when he is repeatedly demanding respect in the exchange below.

1. Funzi: *ngomb i'heshima*.
I need respect.

2. Bar attendant: *ijoki*.
You are joking.

3. Funzi: *ngomb i'heshima… ijoki*?
I need respect. How can I be joking?

I need respect is an utterance made by one of the interlocutors in a conversation with four participants held in a public bar. Conversation, as a social practice and as a resource, is used by the conversationalist, Funzi, to demand a social attribute that translates itself into a particular social identity. By making such a demand, and if the demand receives a positive response, the participant in that way would have created a social identity. Funzi insists upon his demand by employing an interactional feature, which involves repetition, that is a repair mechanism. By

repeating move number **1** as part of move number **3**, the conversationalist employs repair work by repeating an utterance he had made earlier and, thereby, calls for the attention of the addressee and of other participants to pay respect to him. To hammer his demand, he adds another utterance saying, ***How can I be joking?*** All these efforts of negotiations are made to achieve respect, a matter of social reality. This instance, therefore, is a repair mechanism exercise used in conversation to create social reality, which is a respectful social identity. In another instance, Funzi creates another social reality as presented below.

> **4. Funzi:** *chogukora. Tumanze twirekodi… au manze nkwereke ni memori kadi… ati yivuzwaha ni memori kadi mpiga numuziki… we kowagomba… il u'chumenya ngo ni simu… ni vipi. Irediyo irerekana ni beteri hano?*
> What to do. Let's first record ourselves… or let me first show you a memory card… where it is placed in playing music… however you like… So that you understand whether this is a cell phone… or not. Does the radio show the battery here (pointing at the screen)?
>
> **5. Chenda:** *harih i'zerekana (ubutwengo) ha ha ha*
> Some do show [laughter] ha ha ha
>
> **6. Funzi:** *yande yerekana… yande yerekana idyo beteri?*
> Whose shows… whose shows a battery?

In the above exchange, which is made up of the three moves, 4, 5, and 6, the manifestations of the creation of social identity are vibrantly observed. In move number 4, Funzi presents himself as a rich man by owning a very special and expensive cell phone. He presents himself as more knowledgeable than others in the conversation. He behaves in a way that shows that he belongs to a different class than the rest of the participants. He does all this by exposing or revealing things he assumes that others do not know. He, boastfully, narrates about the different special functions of his peculiar cell phone. He also brags about various other gadgets that could be used together with the phone. He explains all these to inform his assumed ignorant counterparts that he has a cell phone. In the course of the exchange, he makes a clear demarcation that he owns something that others could not own, and in doing so, he, socially, upscales himself from other conversationalists and locates himself in an enviable position than others.

When Chenda, in move number **5**, remarks that even other phones display similar functions in the manner as his, for example, displaying the battery functionalities, Funzi strongly refutes the proposition by demanding evidence in move number **6** by using an interactional feature, a repair mechanism made by repetition, *whose shows? Whose shows a battery?* With this, he intends to establish his superior social position, that he is the only one who owns such a cell phone, displaying his material wealth in the course of the exchange. Here, he discursively negotiates to create an affluent social identity. The negotiations made by Funzi attest the argument made by Benwell & Stokoe (2010) that social identity is "located not in the private realms of cognition, emotion and experience, but in the public realms of discourse, interaction and other semiotic systems of meaning making," while it is "actively, ongoingly, dynamically constructed, rather than reflected, in talk and texts of all kind."

4.2 Distribution of the number of turns

The investigation of the interaction order, as a central site for the construction of identities, provides a significant site of analysis and area of reflection in the conversational data. Analysis of interactional processes is also based on a fundamental principle of intersubjectivity that allows identities to be achieved and built through reciprocal moves between interactants (Defina et al. 2006). Interactants can project identifications or rejections towards their partners through cooperative or uncooperative management of conversation (ibid.). They can also confirm and fine-tune local identities that place them in relationships with others, such as "expert" versus "novice" through the use of taking turns frequently more than others (ibid.).
The argument made by Defina et al. (2006) that interactants can project identifications or rejections towards their partners through cooperative or uncooperative management of conversation is attested in the data presented below as follows: in this data, the participant, Funzi, projects himself in this scenario by taking more turns than other participants. He frequently self-selects to become the current speaker. In doing so, he manages to make more turns than other participants as it is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of Number of Turns

Name of a participant	**Number of turns**	**Percentage**
Funzi	56	48.7
Bar attendant	30	26.08
Limu	20	17.3
Chanda	9	7.82
Total	**115**	**100**

As a result of taking more turns than others, Funzi manages to make other participants have a particular image (social identity) of him. The social identity that Funzi manages to make is that he has money, and, therefore, he can even offer his former primary school teacher a beer. He achieves this by using conversation, a social practice as a resource of negotiation in discourse. This was done in moves 7, 8, and 9.

Example:

> **7. Funzi:** *ngugura… nawe uragahangayikira… ngotunywe… mm… (long pause) halafu mwalimu wewe waranfundishije … ugirase ngo jewe sinkhumenya… waranfundishije … nayidya siku walanguliy u'bhubgabga utamenya kwamba nuyu mwanafunzi wondafundishije… wewe yichara kwa vire unywa yino nzoga…*
> That you buy… you also suffer to get it… let's drink… mm… (long pause) you, also, taught me teacher… you think I do not know you… you taught me. And on that day, you bought me some rice without knowing that this is the pupil I taught… please sit, after all, you take this beer.

In the above move, Funzi projects his social identity by showing his positive recognition towards people who once did good things to him and how he handles them with respect and rewards them with great honour. That is what he does to his former primary school teacher.

8. Funzi: *wagomb u'girenthe? sasa ngaha tugomba duhe bga miya tatu.*
What did you want to do? Now here we want you to give us (local beer) of three hundred.

In this move, once again, Funzi projects his monetary ability as an insignia of his social identity. With his financial ability, he orders local beer for three hundred, which he offers to his former teacher and his colleagues in the conversational group. To do this is to tell his colleagues that he has money and he can offer them drinks. This is how he wants other participants in the conversational group to understand and recognize him.

9. Funzi: *tunywa kwete se! kwili jioni wonywa kwete? Nakose wakaguz i'wande?*
Do we drink kwete! (a kind of local beer) … how can you take kwete in the evening? And where did you buy that (beer)?

In all the above moves, Funzi maintains his position of creating once again an affluent social identity when he says that he cannot take Kwete, a local beer of low quality. He also maintains that someone cannot take such a local beer, especially when it is in the evening. The observed discussive negotiations by Funzi affirm the views presented by Norton (1995; 1997) that social identity is a construction and negotiation of "a sense of self" in social relations mediated by language. Therefore, casual conversation is not merely an action of exchanging information with the interlocutors; more significantly, it is also a space to constantly organise and reorganise a sense of "who I am" and "how I relate to the social world."

4.3 Turn length

According to Sacks et al. (1974), turn size is not fixed, but varies. In this view, turn length is used to create social identity. To achieve this, conversationalists lengthen the turn; in other words, they dominate the conversations. They do so to capture the audience's attention for a long duration. In that way, they use the opportunity to express all their potential and abilities on issues or matters under discussion so that their abilities are highly elevated to the apex of the social ladder. In this way, the information about them and their deeds is seen by every participant in the conversation, and the society as a result. This strategy is extensively used in the following data given below.

Example:
In this data, the participant Amoni succeeded in making the longest turns among the rest of the other participants in the conversation. This enabled him to discursively describe himself as a well-informed and long-experienced driver. The moves presented below substantiate this claim.

10. Amoni: *(naya hand a'bonye)[…] bavuze ngo ni bureki yanse. Yarikuruku […] hadya nyene, kuri ridya dya kwanza. Yariguch a'yipiga hasi kudya nyene. Harikwononeka bike.*
[…] they said it was the break that failed. He was supposed to […] right there […] at the first (corner). He was supposed to fall it down right there. Few things would be damaged.

In this move (10), Amoni uses the length of the turn as a conversational strategy to give himself enough time to air out his knowledge and his long experience of driving. He explains how the driver failed. He further explains what the driver would have done to avoid or minimise the damage to the materials that were in the vehicle. He says that the driver was supposed to stop the vehicle right at the first corner. He also says that in doing so, few materials would have been destroyed. In saying so, he is, discursively, negotiating to make sure that it is well known to other participants that he is much more knowledgeable than other participants in the conversation. In that way, Amoni is creating himself a well-informed social identity.

> **11. Amoni:** *karatse nyene […] kuk u'kab u'dashobora gufatish u'kuguru ukach u'hagarar a'ho nyene […] Ntutambuke nintambuko na zibiri chupig a'honyene.*
> If it (the vehicle) gets angry […] Because if you cannot hold with a leg so that you stop right there […] Don't make even two steps. Beat it (fall the vehicle down) right there.

In this move (11), Amoni continues to give his skillful opinions to other participants in the conversation. In the course of rendering his skillful opinions to other conversational participants, he discloses his knowledge of driving to other participants. He explains by giving details of the way the driver would have done it. He says that, if he could not do it (brake) with a leg and stop right there, as he was not supposed to move even a single step further, he was supposed to stop the vehicle right there to avoid severe damage to the vehicle and the contents in it. In the course of Amoni giving all these explanations, he is, actually, discursively negotiating for himself a well-informed (knowledgeable) social identity.

> **12. Amoni:** *Nyomba wumv u'shoboye kugira, kandamiza nifure, nibureki, ukamate hende bureki, usubire wuzuz u'bund u'bupepo. Ukaba nah u'hay u'rayuba, uhay u'rayuba na maisha, wagiye.*
> If you think you can do it, press the break, the break. Hold the hand break, and once again fill the air. If at all you are playing, you are playing with life. You are gone.

Amoni (12) continues to make a long turn. He continues to present his knowledge and skills about driving with great clarity and authority. He presented detailed and informative instructions about what was supposed to be done. Stage by stage, he explains what would be the rescue procedure of the vehicle. Finally, he makes a very strong warning. He starts by saying, "*If you think you can do.*" This piece of utterance, in this conversation, carries very serious and strong advice to his fellow participants in the conversation. He utters this to mean "If you think you can save your life, it is the only moment you can serve it." He goes on to explain step by step what the driver had to do to rescue himself. He speaks with emphasis, which is marked by a repetition of the words, "*Press the break, the break.*" He continues with another step that the driver had to hold the handbrake and then fill the air once again. Lastly, he makes a strong warning saying, "*If at all you are playing, you are playing with your life. You are gone.*" These explanations above by Amoni bear witness to what, normally, talking accomplishes in people's lives and society at large, and it also, shows how things get done through language use. And this is what Goffman (1959) means when he asserts that casual conversations are integral to the process of the creation of social identity, as they allow individuals to present themselves in particular ways and negotiate their social identities.

Therefore, in saying so, Amoni discursively negotiates to create himself a well-experienced and highly educated in the field of driving.

4.4 Code switching and code mixing

Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases, and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event… code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand, (Bokamba quoted in Ayeomoni 2006: 91). And Gumperz (quoted in Romaine 1995) defines code-switching as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems.

For the participants to code-switch or code-mix, several social factors have varied pragmatic meanings. The approach to code-switching and code-mixing as proposed by Appel and Muysken (1987) acknowledges six functions: (i) the referential function, (ii) the directive function, (iii) the expressive function, (iv) the phatic function, (v) metalinguistic function, and (vi) poetic function.

From the above-presented motivations by Appel and Muysken (1987), this paper finds relevant the motivation number (iii), which is the "expressive function" for social identity creation. This paper finds it appropriate to explain how participants in conversation among Ha speakers create their social identity. The motivations are presented below, showing how the participants use them to achieve their social ends.

Example:
The recording was made among women only. The participants were discussing a school child who was bewitched because of his very good academic performance. The conversation reveals how witchcraft beliefs hinder varied aspects of human development.

> **13. Shamsa:** *Kahama, nangwe sikahama? Baramuroze kwa ajiri yu bgenge chane kw i'shule. Yamaze keshi?*
> Kahama, is it not Kahama? They bewitched him because he was very intelligent at school. Has he completed the school on time?
>
> **14. Tina:** *amara uwu mwaka wuza.*
> He will complete in the next year.
>
> **15. Shamsa:** *kila mwaka kwa nini anakuwa namba moja? Kila mwaka. Kila muhula, kila muhula.*
> Why does he become the first every year? Every year. Every term, every term.
>
> **16. Tina:** *kwa hiyo bamuboney u'wivu relo.*
> Therefore, they were jealous of him.
>
> **17. Shamsa:** *na sewage ni hendisamu. […] Yan i'yoshule yabu itora babana bubgenge gusa, nibo bagwar i'vyo.*

Even his father is handsome. […] it means their school selects intelligent children only. Those are the ones who, normally, suffer from such problems.

18. Tina: *mmm.*
Yes.

19. Shamsa: *asilimia uwufata namba moja niw a'gwar i'vyo, na bator u'wuri lasaba ni lasita.*
A large percentage of those who suffer from such problems are those who get number one positions and take those in standard seven and six.

In this piece of conversation, Shamsa is a food seller at the bus stop while Tina is a fruit seller. The conversation begins in Ha language, but as the conversation proceeds, Shamsa (13) mixes it with Swahili language when she uses the words "*kwa ajili […] shule.*" In doing so, Shamsa shows that she can also speak Swahili; hence, she does not belong to the class of Tina. When Tina responds (14), she does not any struggle. She responds in the Ha language. But when Shamsa takes the turn again, she makes a further step. While in (13) Shamsa had code-mixed, this time she completely code-switched to Swahili. She makes the whole utterance (15) in Swahili. With this, she presents herself as a fluent Swahili speaker. In doing so, Shamsa creates herself a Swahili-speaking social identity. From this point, Tina decides to inform her counterpart that she also speaks Swahili. She does this by using the words "*kwa hiyo […] wivu*" in (16). By those words, she declares that she belongs to the class of Swahili speakers and, therefore, belongs to the same class as Shamsa. When Shamsa sees this, she rejects being the same status as Tina; she takes a further step, which is to tell Tina that they don't belong to the same class. In (17), Shamsa mixes Ha with the English word "*handsome*." In switching to English words, Shamsa informs Tina that she also speaks English, and she, therefore, belongs to the class of people who speak English; the assumed educated people and people with good administrative positions in the government. Hence, she creates for himself an educated and highly regarded class social identity.

From code-switching and code-mixing, as a conversational strategy, the study finds out that in casual conversation, participants among Ha speakers, discursively, negotiate to create their social identities as Appel and Muysken (1987) state that, in the case of an expressive function, the speaker switches code to express their "mixed identity." More particularly, to Ha speakers, a participant discursively negotiates to see himself or herself at the apex of the social ladder. This is evidenced by what Shamsa accomplishes when she switches from Ha to Swahili in the first place, and then, from Swahili to English. This is what Gee (2014) underscores: he argues that discourses are ways of being in the world that are expressed through language and other semiotic resources. He further presents that casual conversations are arenas where multiple discourses intersect, and individuals navigate these discourses to negotiate their identities. Through casual talk, people align themselves with particular social groups, roles, and practices, which help them to create their social identities.

4.5 Membership categorisation

Membership categorisation refers to a conversationalist's decision to identify himself with a person with a great reputation. Membership categorisation focuses on the recognizability of people as certain sorts of people or, more specifically, people as certain sorts of members of

society, and how this recognizability is a resource for members in their dealings with each other. There are several social groups that people would desire to identify with. The groups include the following: the ruling class, rich people, businesspeople, government employees, educated people, and town dwellers.

Example:
The recording was made at a business centre. The participants included customers who had gone shopping.

> **20. Ndalu:** *ntya menya kuhay u'mbaz i'porojo.*
> By now, I know that you are making a joke.
>
> **21. Rusha:** *kwa hiyo ni porojo?*
> So it's a joke?
>
> **22. Ndalu:** *mm […] ndokwich u'womuhanga […] ndagusekure […]*
> mm […] I can sacrifice (suicide bombing) myself […] and beat you
>
> **23. Rusha:** *usekurinkoni jewe […] aha ni baa yofungwa. Je simpora shima gushindwa […] aramagumi ndokudunda kira muntu asanga arikiyobherane. Je […]*
> Beating me with a stick (fimbo) […] even all the shops can get closed. I never like being defeated […] I can give you fists until you become shapeless. I […]
>
> **24. Ndalu:** *ndokwitow u'muhanga nyene.*
> I can, really, sacrifice (suicide bombing) myself.
>
> **25. Rusha:** *witow u'muhanga nyene?*
> Sacrifice (suicide bombing) yourself?
>
> **26. Ndalu:** *ee […] iwawe.*
> Yes […] to you.

The data given above demonstrates how membership categorisation is used to create social identity by means of a participant in a conversation struggling to attach and identify himself or herself with a member or a social group of certain characteristics.

In the data given, the participant, **Ndalu**, associates and identifies with suicide bombers. Ndalu knows very well how suicide bombers are a great threat in countries where such military technique is used. The evils of suicide bombers are known even outside those countries. No person would like to even hear about such happening. With this understanding, **Ndalu** (22) said, "*mm […] I can sacrifice (commit suicide bombing) myself […] and beat you.*" His association and identification with the suicide bombers, a group of people who are ready to lose their lives to, destructively, kill their enemies is the use of membership categorisation, a conversational strategy. By the repetition, he makes in (24) when he says again, "*I can sacrifice (commit suicide bombing) myself*," **Ndalu** emphasizes his decision to kill himself too, destructively, kill the participant **Rusha**, if his money is not paid. With this emphasis on association and identification, he wants to tell the participant, **Rusha**, that there is no way he could tolerate not being paid money for his beer. He wants to say that he could do anything

disastrous to get his money paid. With his association and identification, **Ndalu** creates a suicide-bombing social identity.

4.6 Unfolding the Assumed Silent Great Social Identity

This is another conversational technique that conversationalists use to create their social identity. With this technique, the participant narrates different events or experiences that prove him or her a person of great social respect before the public or a gathering**.**

Example:

> **27. Rama:** […] *Nuwundi munsi haza habh u'mubhara hariya lelo. Wamubhala […] bhalatulalika […] bhatum u'wonyene. Ulabgila na msaza waw a'ze. Atee. Alambgil a'ti bhamam i'dya, bhalobh a'bhalinulubanza. yarahay a'bhatizwa […] kwi ara si […] wuya mama. Araz a'tulinumubhara […] mama waw a'hayabhatizwa. Nthee ndoza. Bhalibhitangira bhano kugenda […] bhazabhahaye bhabhabhaza […] nthyo walabgiye kaka wawe? Atee ndaramubgiye. None kwataraza? Naw a'kabhaza kaka wawe wahe? Uwo bhagamba bhahaye bhaghamba nde? Bhakamuziganya nyene […] nthyo wewe waramubgiye wewe? Ee bhaga ndaravuye […] ndamubgira. Yaani ukabhon a'taje. Ubgo bgomuza mugira bgubhurandage […] ataje urobhutamubgiye. Nanj u'womunsi nvuze nkhasibha ndobha ndononye. nibhasekeli ndikunzira*
>
> […] And on the other day, there was a feast there. That feast […] they invited us […] they sent the same person (my sister) to tell, also, your brother to come. She responded, yes. She came to inform me that our mothers would be having a feast. She was being baptised in the arasi, [RC - Roman Catholic][…] my mother. She came and said, "We have a feast. Your mother is being baptised." I said "I will come." They went there early. They (parents) had started asking her (my sisters) "Did you tell your brother." She responded, "Yes I told him." They wanted to know why he didn't come. Then, he (my brother-in-law) asked, "Which brother of yours?" The one they are talking about. Whom are they talking about? They (parents) asked her over and over again. Did you tell him? She responded, I informed […] I told him. If he does not come, the way you behave is as if you don't have a brain […] if he doesn't come, it means you didn't tell him. And on that day I said if I missed, I would have destroyed the party. I rode, slowly, the bicycle on the way to the party.

Rama in (27) continues to relate by giving all the details of the event which, in the course of his life, gave him great social respect and lifted him to the pinnacle of the social ladder, and, hence, he was regarded as a person of great respect among people of his society. He narrates how he was invited to the feast when his mother was being baptised in the Roman Catholic faith, "*They sent the same person (my sister), tell also your brother to come.* […] *She was being baptised in the arasi, [RC - Roman Catholic] …*" Rama explains, also, how they started to ask his sister if she had informed him. When they saw that he was not appearing at the feast, *they (the parents) started to ask her* "*Did you tell your brother.*" They continued to ask if she had informed me. "*They (the parents) asked her over and over again. Did you tell him?* […] *If he does not come, the way you behave as if you don't have a brain […] if he doesn't come, it means you didn't tell him.*"

He also tells how his brother-in-law, inquisitively, wanted to know the person all the gathering was waiting for to start the celebrations. The explanations given by Rama's sister to

her husband show that there was a very important person whose arrival determined the beginning and value of the celebrations. This is illustrated by different instances made by the parents in a way that they were constantly asking if he was informed.
Rama, therefore, explains all these to show his fellow participants in a conversation the way he received with great respect on that particular event. He narrates events with expectations of receiving the same from those participants.

> **28. Rama:** *none wa mama azagamba […] muhaye mushangiliy u'wahe? Wakaka agiy a'za […] wamuhung a'raje? Ate […] ndashimye. Nagahundu (vigeregere) kavugwa […] (vigeregere) ngize ee […] agize ee! twalidushitishizwe nuwu nyene mpaka shike […] ati wewe wabhona ngendayoga ngosikaka. ni kaka. Ee uwu lelo atangula nugutinya lelo […] agize muza mwendeshwa ntha nyene […]*
> *mwakeye mwakeye mwakeye […] mwalaye twalaye […] at mwayitangiye […] ee twajekale. Mm […] ahayeyisaliza*
> Then, my mother asked, "Whom are you applauding?" Our brother has arrived. The mother asked, "Has that son arrived?" They replied, yes. The mother responded, "Thanks a lot." A great cheer was heard with various noises of joy. I was astonished. My brother-in-law was, also, astonished saying, "who made us not to start the feast until he arrived?" The sister told her husband, "You saw me going there. You thought he is not my brother. He is my brother." The brother-in-law started fearing. The brother-in-law told his wife, "You are dictated by him."
> Good morning! Good morning! Good morning… how did you sleep? We slept well. Did you arrive very early? The brother-in-law responded, "Yes we came very early," mm… with great pretense.

In (28), the last piece of evidence but not the least in elaborating on the event that gave Rama great respect in his society, Rama explains how there was a great cheer when he arrived at his parents' home. He reports that his sisters shouted and, then, his mother wanted to know what was happening. When they told her that their brother had arrived, the mother shouted, "*Thanks a lot.*" Rama, further, says that he, himself, was astonished and his brother-in-law was also astonished, saying, "*Is this the one who made us not to start the feast until he arrived?*" Rama's sister tells her astonished husband, "*You saw me going there. You thought he is not my brother. He is my brother.*" Her husband was greatly afraid. Certainly, the event and the explanations showed the great position of Rama in his clan that it is of great respect. For that reason, therefore, Rama proudly narrates this event to these participants because it moved him up the social ladder. As he narrates, once again, the event, he wants to receive the same respect he received when the event happened for the first time. In this way, he creates a great respect for social identity.

5 Conclusion

This paper has established by observations and arguments that participants in different conversations could create social identities through the resourceful use of different interactional features. The interactional features used, according to the available data, are as follows: the first one is repair work, which functions in forms of repetitions, corrections, clarifications, restatements, and emphases. This means that when people are engaged in conversation, a

participant would now and then, whether consciously or unconsciously, either repeat, correct, clarify, restate, or emphasise a particular utterance, in doing so the participant would end up creating a particular social reality. The second feature is the distribution of the number of turns. This feature accomplishes the task of creating social identity by taking more turns than the other participants in conversation. The third feature is turn length. This feature is used by the participant to create a social identity by the means of holding the current speaker's turn for a longer duration than other participants. Code-switching and code-mixing are the fourth feature that is also used to create social identity. This feature is used when a speaker switches code to express his or her mixed identity. A speaker, discursively, negotiates to see himself or herself at the apex of the social ladder in a he or she may switch from an ethnic to a national language, for example, and then to a foreign language. The fifth feature or interactional device is membership categorisation. This device is used by participants in conversation by identifying themselves with persons who are vested with a great reputation in society. People with great reputations in a society may include, for example, political figures, CEOs of famous companies, very rich persons, and others. The last device or feature observed in creating social identity is the unfolding of the assumed silent great social identity. With this device, the participant in a conversation narrates different events or experiences that gave him or her respect in the past. The participant narrates events that proved great social respect before the public or gathering so that the current addressees may offer him the same respect with reference to the past. Because of all the social identities created, it was also found that whatever the interactional features used, the outcomes of the discursive negotiations have been, always, the same. The outcomes have been that the participant, who would succeed in creating his or her social identity among other participants, would invariably be successful at the expense of other participants' social identities. His or her success would always result in unequal relationships with other participants. In other words, the consequences of discursive negotiations would be of asymmetrical relationship between the successful participant and the rest of the participants in the conversation. These findings attest to the findings of Zimmerman and West (1975) who in their work titled "Sex Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversation" found and reported that males assert an asymmetrical right to control topics and do so with evident repercussions that men deny equal status to women as conversational partners concerning rights to the full utilisation of their turn and support for the development of topics.

It was also found during the analysis that, turn-length conversational strategy has provided the political discourses with their roots and sustenance. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the turn-length strategy rarely allows other participants to speak and is a preferred strategy for dominance. Secondly, because the turn-length strategy intends to dominate the current speaker's position for a long duration to air out the best of his or her potentialities so that the other participants or the addressees will accept him or her as somebody with a different and peculiar social identity. This is also done for the speaker-politician to grab a chance to address the audience for a similar purpose of selling his or her best potential so that the audience will accept him. Therefore, given the similar intents of the turn length strategy in casual conversation and political campaigns, this paper states that the turn length strategy in casual conversation is a default form of political campaign.

Further, it was found in this paper that citing sources in academic writings draws on and gets its roots from membership categorisation conversational strategy. This is because the purpose of membership categorisation as a conversational strategy is that the participant in a conversation seeks to identify himself or herself with people with great reputations; people who are certain sorts of people or people who are certain sorts of members of the society so that the

participant may be identified along with the social status of that particular person. This purpose is identical to that of citing sources in academia, with which the writer seeks to justify his or her argument by referring to other renowned academics or researchers in that particular field. Given the similar intents of these two different discourses, this paper again asserts that the membership categorisation conversational strategy is a default form of citing sources in academia. This assertion is affirmed by Gardener (1999: 264) when he states that ordinary conversation is the default version of talk and that all other forms of talk-in-interaction are derived from ordinary conversation, and are, thus, culturally and socially restricted. For example, modes of talk in education, in law, in the media, and in medicine are likely to be derived from local (cultural) forms of talk-in-interactions.

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Adronis Kanonko Selestino
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
The University of Dodoma, Tanzania
e-mail: yeadronissu@gmail.com

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