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Abstract
Classroom praise has been examined as a form of teacher feedback and positive evaluation, with an emphasis on teachers' expressions. This study extends this focus by examining the linguistic forms and pragmatic functions of choral praise routines that teachers and learners jointly perform in Tanzanian primary school classrooms. Using qualitative classroom discourse analysis, the study examined 20 audio-recorded lessons involving ten teachers across six primary schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Non-participant observations were supplemented by follow-up interviews with two teachers to clarify selected expressions whose meanings or classroom uses were unclear from the recorded interactions. The analysis identified 20 occurrences representing 12 distinct choral praise routine types. These routines incorporated teacher-initiated cues, evaluative expressions, rhythmic and repetitive patterns, and vocal forms. Four pragmatic functions were identified: recognition of achievement, positive evaluation, celebration of achievement, and encouragement. The findings show that choral praise routines transformed individual learner achievement into a shared classroom event. Drawing on Speech Act Theory, the study demonstrates how the pragmatic significance of choral praise expressions emerges through their use within recurring classroom interactions. This study contributes to classroom discourse research by highlighting the linguistic forms and pragmatic functions of collectively organised praise in Tanzanian primary school classrooms. The study is limited to six primary schools in Dar es Salaam and to choral praise routines initiated by teachers.

Introduction
Classroom interaction between teachers and learners is primarily mediated by language. Classroom language comprises verbal and non-verbal expressions that teachers and learners use to teach, learn, and interact. Classroom interactions include routine instructions, conversations between teachers and learners, and conversations among learners. According to Maine (2024), classroom interaction enhances idea sharing and collaborative sense-making. It is how teachers and learners communicate and respond to each other. Classroom interaction encompasses a wide range of communicative practices through which teachers and learners negotiate meaning and construct social relationships (Cazden, 2001). Feedback is part of classroom interaction and involves information given to students

about their learning progress, performance, or work (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). In classrooms, feedback can be oral, written, or non-verbal, and it often operates through dialogue during ongoing teaching activities (Nassaji, 2016; Patra et al., 2022; Masinde et al., 2023). Feedback may acknowledge successful performance through praise and other forms of positive evaluation or identify discrepancies between learners' current performance and expected learning goals to guide improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In classroom discourse, praise is typically treated as positive feedback that conveys approval or admiration for students' behaviour or performance (Haydon et al., 2020; Floress et al., 2017; Al-Ghamdi, 2017). Studies further show that praise functions as a distinct form of feedback with variable reinforcement properties (Brophy, 1981; Floress et al., 2017). In the classroom, teachers may praise learners individually or use collective praise. Research on classroom interaction shows that teachers organise exchanges by initiating moves and eliciting subsequent learner responses (Nassaji & Wells, 2000). Research on choral responding also shows that coordinated whole class verbal responses constitute a form of classroom participation (Heward et al., 1989; Heward, 1996). Although these studies do not specifically examine choral praise, they provide a useful basis for understanding how teachers organise collective classroom participation. Choral praise routines include varied linguistic forms, such as familiar evaluative phrases, recurrent chants, classroom-specific verbal forms, and vocalisations whose meanings depend on the interactional context. Interpreting choral praise expressions requires consideration of both their linguistic form and the specific contexts and interactional sequences in which they are produced. While collective praise routines may involve coordinated expressions, sounds, gestures, clapping, and bodily movements, this study concentrates primarily on the verbal and vocal expressions embedded within them and the meanings they acquire in classroom interaction.

Choral praise expressions vary in their linguistic characteristics. While some consist of familiar evaluative expressions, others comprise classroom-specific responses whose meanings are not immediately apparent from their lexical forms. Their significance lies not only in their linguistic form but also in how they function in classroom contexts. Some expressions may have limited or unclear lexical meaning when considered in isolation, yet become interpretable through the interactional circumstances in which they occur. Examining choral praise expressions is important because their pragmatic functions cannot always be established from their linguistic forms alone. Their interpretation requires attention to the classroom events in which they occur, the teacher's initiating expressions, and the collective responses through which praise is performed. Such an analysis shows how linguistic expressions acquire pragmatic significance within collectively organised classroom interaction. Therefore, this study adopts Speech Act Theory, which conceptualises utterances as actions through which speakers accomplish communicative purposes (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). The theory is applied to examine the communicative actions performed through teachers' initiating expressions and learners' collective praise responses within their classroom contexts.

Empirical research on classroom discourse in Tanzania has examined various aspects of teacher-learner interaction, including classroom participation, teacher questioning, feedback, and language use in teaching and learning (Muro, 2018; Shartiely, 2022). Studies of praise have also considered its interpersonal and pedagogical dimensions. Mwambapa and Msuya (2022), for example, examined teachers' use of compliments as linguistic politeness strategies during classroom interaction in selected secondary schools in Dar es Salaam. Their study shows that teachers employ compliments not only to evaluate learners but also as part of interpersonal interaction in the classroom. Similarly, Barnes (2024) examined teachers' use of praise and its contribution to classroom climate in Dar es

Salaam secondary schools, highlighting praise's role in fostering a positive learning environment. These studies are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that praise and evaluative language constitute meaningful components of classroom interaction in the Tanzanian context. However, both studies were conducted in secondary schools and focused primarily on teacher-produced praise and compliments. In contrast, the present study examines collectively produced choral praise expressions in primary school classrooms and the pragmatic functions they serve within classroom routines.

Praise in Classroom Discourse

Praise in classroom discourse has attracted significant interest among researchers across disciplines. Studies have examined praise as a pedagogical practice, a motivational strategy, an evaluative form of classroom language, and an interactional resource.

From a pedagogical perspective, research has examined the relationship between praise and learners' motivation, engagement, and classroom behaviour. Brophy (1981), for example, examined the functions of teacher praise and showed that its meaning and effects depend on how and when it is used. His classroom-process analysis further indicated that teacher praise is often irregular, non-contingent, and insufficiently specific, suggesting that its function cannot be understood simply as reinforcement. These findings highlight the importance of examining praise in relation to the interactional context in which it occurs. Burnett (2002) investigated the relationship between teacher praise and students' perceptions of the classroom environment across six rural elementary schools. The study found that praise was not directly associated with students' perceptions of the classroom environment or with teacher-student relationships. However, students who were more satisfied with their classrooms received more general praise and positive feedback. This finding suggests that the significance of praise cannot be understood by its occurrence or frequency alone; it also depends on the forms and contexts in which it is used. In a review of research on teacher praise, Jenkins et al. (2015) examined its rates, types, and associations with student behaviour. They identified continuing gaps in research, particularly the need to distinguish different types of praise and to examine how praise varies across grades and instructional activities. From a linguistic perspective, researchers have examined how praise is expressed and the functions these expressions serve in classroom interaction. Anggreni et al. (2019), for example, examined teachers' praise in classroom interaction, while Rahmani et al. (2021) investigated teacher praise and learners' responses in English classroom interaction. This line of research shifts attention from the educational effects of praise to praise as language in use, making its linguistic form and interactional context relevant to the present study.

Recent interactional and multimodal studies have further shown that the design of praise extends beyond its lexical form. Its sequential position and accompanying embodied resources may influence how learners interpret an evaluative expression and how they respond. Waring (2008) demonstrated that the sequential placement of positive assessments can shape subsequent learner participation and the development of classroom interaction. Similarly, Hosoda and Aline (2010) showed that the interpretation and interactional consequences of positive assessments are shaped by their sequential position and the resources participants use to respond. Together, these perspectives suggest that linguistic form, sequential placement, and interactional context shape praise.

In the Tanzanian context, research has also examined praise and related evaluative expressions in classroom interaction. Mwambapa and Msuya (2022) found that teachers used compliments as linguistic politeness strategies in selected secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, demonstrating the interpersonal role of positive evaluation in teacher-learner interaction. Barnes (2024) similarly

examined teacher praise in secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and highlighted its contribution to learners' confidence, participation, and classroom climate. These studies show that praise and other positive evaluative expressions are meaningful practices in Tanzanian classrooms. However, existing Tanzanian studies have focused primarily on teacher-produced praise and compliments, with limited attention to praise practices in primary school classrooms, collectively organised praise routines, and the pragmatic functions of learners' choral responses. This leaves an insufficient understanding of how teachers organise praise when they recruit the whole class into a shared response, and how such routines shape learner participation and the interactional organisation of classroom discourse. Examining these practices is particularly relevant in the Tanzanian context because classroom praise may be realised through locally established linguistic and interactional routines whose meanings and functions become apparent in context. The present study therefore investigates choral praise expressions in Tanzanian primary school classrooms, focusing on their linguistic forms and pragmatic functions. Specifically, it seeks to (i) identify and classify the choral praise expressions used in classroom interaction and (ii) analyse the pragmatic functions they perform within their interactional contexts.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Speech Act Theory, associated with Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969). According to this theory, language not only conveys information but also performs actions. In specific contexts, speakers may simultaneously perform actions such as requesting, thanking, congratulating, evaluating, or encouraging. Austin (1962) identifies three dimensions of speech acts: the locutionary act, the production of a meaningful linguistic utterance; the illocutionary act, the communicative action performed through the utterance; and the perlocutionary act, the effect the utterance has on the hearer. Searle (1969) further develops the analysis of illocutionary acts by relating utterances to their communicative purposes and the conventional conditions governing their use. Among these dimensions, the illocutionary dimension is particularly relevant to the present study, as it focuses on the functions that choral praise expressions fulfil in classroom interaction. Searle (1976) classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. Three categories are particularly relevant to the present study. Directives are reflected in teachers' instructions and prompts that initiate choral praise routines, while assertives occur when teachers confirm the correctness of learners' responses. Expressives appear in congratulatory and appreciative expressions that positively acknowledge learners' achievements. These categories provide a basis for interpreting the communicative functions of the expressions within their classroom contexts.

This study applies Speech Act Theory to analyse choral praise expressions in relation to the specific classroom events in which they occur. The analysis examines the teacher's initiating expression, the preceding learner performance, and the subsequent collective learner response. This approach distinguishes between the linguistic form of a praise expression and the communicative action it performs in context. The collective response is treated as part of the interactional organisation of the praise routine, while the pragmatic analysis focuses on the communicative actions these expressions achieve. Speech Act Theory provides an appropriate framework for this study because it enables the analysis of the communicative actions performed through choral praise expressions within their classroom contexts. Rather than limiting the examination to lexical meanings, the study investigates the communicative roles of these expressions.

In applying Speech Act Theory, the analysis distinguished between the communicative action performed through the teacher's initiating utterance and the action performed through the learners'

collective response. The latter was examined within the interactional sequence rather than automatically classified as an independent illocutionary act or a perlocutionary effect. Its pragmatic function was interpreted in relation to the linguistic expression, the preceding classroom event and the purpose of the routine.

Methodology

The study used qualitative classroom discourse analysis to examine choral praise expressions as linguistic practices within classroom interaction. It was conducted in six primary schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The schools were selected through convenience sampling because they were accessible to the researcher through regular professional visits. These schools provided opportunities to observe naturally occurring classroom interactions in which teachers and learners engaged in instructional activities, making them suitable for examining the linguistic forms and pragmatic functions of choral praise expressions. Ten teachers from these schools participated in the study, as they were the only teachers available and willing to participate during the data-collection period. Each teacher provided informed consent before data-collection. The study used two data-collection methods: non-participant observation as the principal method and follow-up interviews. The researcher observed and audio-recorded two lessons from each teacher, making a total of 20 lessons. The observed lessons were regular classroom instructional periods across Classes 1 to 7 and different subjects. No individual student data, identifiers, or personal student metrics were taken during the 20 observed lessons. The 20 recorded lessons were fully transcribed to capture classroom interaction surrounding the praise routines. The transcripts were examined to identify instances in which praise was performed collectively during classroom interactions. Each identified instance was extracted together with its surrounding interactional context, including the classroom activity preceding the praise and the expressions produced during the routine. These extracts constituted the corpus of choral praise expressions used in the analysis.

This study used broad transcription to capture the interactional sequence in a choral praise routine. The following transcription conventions were used: T = Teacher; S = Student; Class = Whole class of learners; (...) = short pauses in speech; () = translation of non-English expressions. The analysis identified 20 instances of choral praise across the 20 observed lessons, which were grouped into 12 distinct routine types. In this study, a routine type refers to an identifiable pattern of teacher initiation and collective learner response. All identified occurrences were included in the analysis; none were excluded. Each routine was analysed within its immediate interactional sequence, including the teacher's preceding task or question, learner performance, teacher initiation of the praise routine, and the subsequent collective learner response, as illustrated in Figure 1.

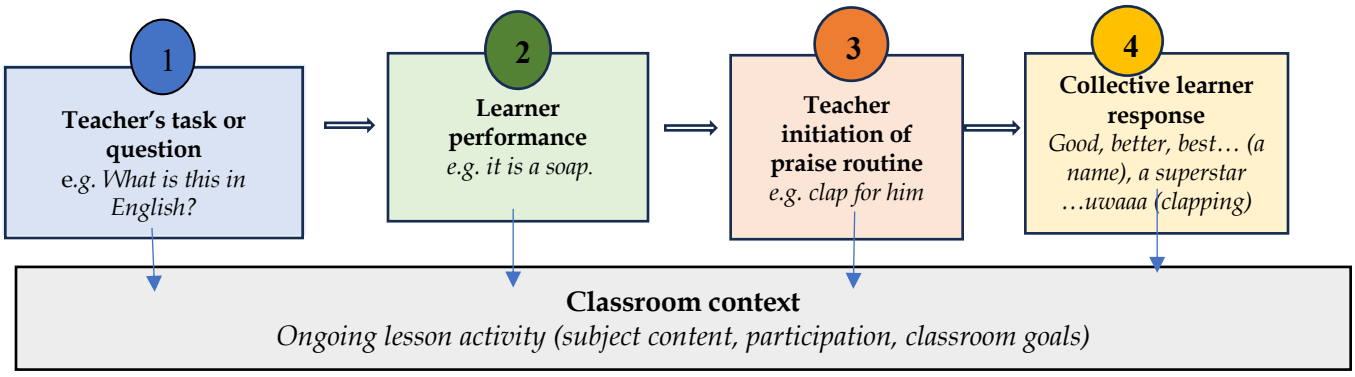


Figure 1: Framework of the interactional sequence in a choral praise routine

This interactional sequence provided the context for interpreting the expressions. The identified vocalisations and accompanying actions were treated as contextual evidence. The routines were first examined for their linguistic forms and then analysed in relation to their interactional contexts to identify recurring pragmatic functions. The analysis focused on the communicative actions performed through the expressions within each routine.

Following the observations, two teachers were purposively selected for semi-structured follow-up interviews because their lessons contained expressions whose meanings or classroom use were unclear from the recordings. These interviews provided additional contextual information about the selected expressions. When an expression could not be assigned a reliable meaning or linguistic origin, this uncertainty was retained in the analysis. The schools' authorities granted permission to conduct classroom observations and audio recordings, and participating teachers provided informed consent. To protect participants' and schools' identities, the researcher used pseudonymous labels throughout: the six schools are identified as School A-F and the ten teachers as T1-T10.

Findings

The analysis of the 20 observed lessons identified 20 instances of choral praise routines, comprising 12 distinct routine types. These included the Mosquito Clap, Tumchumu Best (Let us kiss the best), Good, Better, Best, Pasha, Pasha, Pasha, Boresha (heat, heat, heat, improve), Hongera Bingwa (Congratulations, champion"), Makofi ya Kibunge ("Parliamentary clapping"), Super Star, g-double-o-j-o-b, Fireworks Clap, Hongera Imara Waa ("Congratulations, strong one"), Helicopter Clap, and Atama-Tobago-Tamarina. The routines vary in linguistic, vocal, and rhythmic form, and the presentation below examines their linguistic features and pragmatic functions.

Linguistic Forms of Choral Praise Expressions

In every case, the teacher-initiated the routine with directives, hortatives, or verbal prompts to elicit a whole class response. The classes' responses varied in linguistic and vocal style, ranging from direct praise and congratulations to rhythmic chants, collective spelling, and vocal sound effects. The following subsections examine these linguistic forms.

Teacher-Initiated Cues and Directives

All 12 choral praise routines were teacher-initiated. In each case, the teacher used a verbal cue or directive to start the routine and elicit a collective response from the learners. The forms ranged from direct imperatives, such as 'catch it', 'kill it', 'clap for him/her', and 'give him a helicopter clap', to the hortative 'Tumchumu best' ('Let us kiss the best'). Other routines began with shorter verbal cues, such as 'mosquito' and 'makofi' ('clap'), which signalled the expected collective response. The following extracts show the interactional sequences in a choral praise routine.

(1) Mosquito Clap

(School A, T1- Class 3: Subject: English Lesson: personal pronouns)
T1: Who can read the words on the blackboard?
S: him, her, you
T1: Let us give him a mosquito clap
T1: Mosquito
Class: nywiiiiii (Mosquito sound)
T1: Mosquito
Class: nywiiiiii (Mosquito sound)

T1: Catch it
Class: Mime catching
T1: Catch it
Class: Mime catching
T1: Kill it
Class: Clap
T1: Kill it
Class: Clap

(2) G-double-o-j-o-b Clap
(School F, T7- Class 2: Subject: Mathematics: Lesson: Fraction)
T7: Someone, divide this orange into 4 equal parts!
S: (Volunteered and divided the orange into 4 equal parts)
T7: Good! G-double-o
Class: G-double-o-j-o-b
Class: G-double-o-j-o-b
Class (clap 3 times)
Class: eeeh
Class: (clap then bang)
Class: yeeeeh

This pattern shows that learners' participation in these routines depended on teacher initiation. The teacher's cues not only introduced the activity but also shaped the form of learners' responses. For instance, the cue 'Mosquito' elicited the mosquito-like sound 'nywiiiiii', whereas 'catch it' prompted a catching gesture and 'kill it' resulted in clapping. Likewise, 'g-double-o' elicited the spelling of 'good job' as g-double-o- j-o-b, along with the vocal sequences 'eeeh' and 'yeeeeh' and the clapping and banging actions. Thus, the teacher's verbal cues served as interactional triggers that structured both the initiation and the form of the collective praise routines. Table 1 presents the teacher-initiated cues and directives identified across the analysed choral praise routines

Table 1: Teacher-initiated Cues and Directives

Praise Routine	Teacher's Initiating Expression	Literal Translation	Form
R1	Let us give him a mosquito clap; Mosquito; Catch it; Kill it	-	Hortative + imperatives
R2	Tumchumu best	Let us kiss the best	Hortative
R3	Let's congratulate; good, better, best; again	-	Hortative + verbal cues
R4	Pasha, pasha, pasha, boresha	Heat, heat, heat, improve!	Repeated verbal cue
R5	Naam, hilo ni jibu sahihi!... makofi	That is the correct answer…Clap	Evaluation + directive
R6	Makofi matatu ya kibunge	Three parliamentary claps	Directive
R7	Super star	-	Verbal cue
R8	Tumpe hongera	Let us give him congratulations	Hortative
R9	G-double-o- j-o-b	Good job	Verbal/letter-name cue
R10	Give him fireworks clap	-	Directive
R11	Give him a helicopter clap	-	Directive

R12	Atama; tobago; tamarina	-	Patterned verbal cues

The table shows the variety of linguistic forms used to initiate choral praise. Some routines were introduced with explicit imperatives or hortatives, while others used shorter verbal or patterned cues. This variety suggests that teacher initiation was not limited to a single grammatical structure; instead, teachers used multiple forms to activate established collective praise routines.

Evaluative and Congratulatory Expressions

The data indicated that choral praise often took the form of explicit evaluative and congratulatory language. These forms positively evaluated learners' responses, recognised successful performance, or directly congratulated the learner. The expressions ranged from single evaluative terms such as *'best'* and *'imara'* (strong) to extended expressions such as *'hilo ni jibu sahihi'* (That is the correct answer) and *'leo umeng'aa kama nyota'* (Today you have shone like a star). Extract 3 from the data illustrates:

(3) Hongera, Imara
(School C, T8- Class: 2- Subject: Stadi za Afya na Mazingira (Health Care): Lesson: Usafi wa Binafsi (Personal Hygiene))

T8: Nani anaweza kutaja vifaa vya kuogea? (Who can name the items used for bathing?)
S: Sabuni, ndoo ya maji, dodoki, maji safi, taulo (soap, bucket of water, sponge, clean water, towel)
T8: Tumpe hongera (let us give him congratulations)
Class: hongera (congratulations)
Class: three claps
Class: Imara (strong)
Class: three claps
Class: waaaa

(4) Hongera Bingwa
(School E, T5- Class 4: Subject: Kiswahili - Lesson: Wakati Ujao (Future tense))

T5: Tunga sentensi moja, useme utafanya nini kesho asubuhi? (Make one sentence; tell us what you are going to do tomorrow)
S: Mimi nitaenda hospitali kesho (I will go to the hospital tomorrow)
T5: Naam, Hilo ni jibu sahihi! Umeweza mkubwa! Makofi (Yes, that is the correct answer! Well done, champion! Clap.)
T5: Makofi (clap)
Class: Three claps
Class: Hongera bingwa (Congratulations, champion)
Class: Leo umeng'aa kama nyota (Today you have shone like a star)

The extracts indicate that both teachers and learners produced evaluative and congratulatory expressions. Although teachers initiated or shaped certain praise sequences, learners also contributed by producing expressions that evaluated and celebrated successful performance. Consequently, evaluation and congratulation were collaboratively constructed within the choral praise routines. Table 2 presents the evaluative and congratulatory expressions identified in the analysed data.

Table 2: Evaluative and Congratulatory Expressions

Routine	Expression	Literal Translation/Meaning	Linguistic Feature
R2	best	the best	Evaluative adjective
R3	Good, better, best	-	Gradated evaluation
R4	Ameweza	he/she has succeeded/done well	Evaluation of ability
R5	Hilo ni jibu sahihi	That is the correct answer	Explicit evaluation
R5	Umeweza mkubwa	Well done, champion!	Positive evaluation
R5	Hongera bingwa	Congratulations, champion	Congratulation + evaluation
R5	Leo umeng'aa kama nyota	Today you have shone like a star	Metaphorical evaluation
R8	Hongera; Imara	Congratulations; strong	Congratulatory + evaluative expression
R7	a superstar	-	Evaluative label
R9	g-double-o- j-o-b	Good job	Choral spelling of evaluative expression

The expressions differed in how they constructed positive evaluation. Some directly evaluated the learner's performance, as in *'Hilo ni jibu sahihi'* (That is the correct answer), while others evaluated successful task performance through expressions such as *'ameweza'* ('he/she has succeeded'). Although *'ameweza'* denotes successful accomplishment, its use in the observed classroom interaction conveyed a positive evaluation of the learner's performance. Other forms used labels such as *'bingwa'* (champion) and *'superstar'*, while '*good, better, best'* constructed evaluation through gradation. The metaphorical expression *'leo umeng'aa kama nyota'* (today you have shone like a star) further illustrates how positive evaluation was constructed through figurative language following the clapping sequence, as shown in extract 4.

Repetition, Rhythm and Choral Spelling

Repetition and rhythmic patterning were prominent features of the choral praise routines. These were expressed through repeated lexical items, patterned sequences, choral spelling, and vocal forms. In some routines, repetition involved sequencing words or expressions, while in others it involved letter names or repeated sounds. The following extract presents a repetition example:

(5) Helicopter Clap
(School D, T10- Class: 1- Numeracy -Lesson: Numbers)
T10: Come and count the bottle tops
S: Counted 10 bottle tops
T10: Give him a Helicopter Clap
Class: spinning head
Class: chop-chop-chop, wop-wop-wop
Class: clap once

The repeated sequence 'chop-chop-chop, wop-wop-wop' formed a rhythmic vocal pattern that was part of the collective praise response. Its significance stemmed primarily from its conventional use within the classroom routine rather than from any literal lexical meaning. Table 3 presents selected examples of these patterns across the routines.

Table 3: Repetition, Rhythm and Choral Spelling

Routine	Expression	Linguistic Pattern
R1	Mosquito… Mosquito; Catch it… Catch it; Kill it… Kill it	Lexical repetition
R3	Good, better, best; good, better, best	Patterned sequence + gradation
R4	Pasha, pasha, pasha, boresha… boresha (heat, heat, heat…improve)	Lexical repetition + rhythm
R9	g-double-o-j-o-b	Choral spelling + rhythm
R10	One, two… fshuu, fshuu; one, two… fshuu, fshuu; one, two, three… fshi, fshi, fshi	Counting + vocal repetition + rhythm
R11	chop-chop-chop, wop-wop-wop	Vocal repetition + rhythm

The examples indicate that repetition and rhythmic patterning were achieved through repeated lexical items, structured sequences, choral spelling, counting, and recurring vocal sounds. These elements facilitated the coordinated production of collective praise responses.

Classroom-Specific Expressions

One observed routine featured an expression whose meaning and linguistic origin could not be determined from either the classroom interaction or the follow-up interview. The expression, 'atama-tobago-tamarina' (R12), appeared as a patterned verbal sequence after a pupil's correct response during the lesson. The sequence unfolded as follows:

(6) Atama-Tobago-Tamarina
(School B, T2- Class: 2- Reading -Lesson: Phonics)
T2: Who can read the sounds on this card?
S: /s/ /z/
T2: Atama
Class: One clap
T2: Tobago
Class: Two claps
T2: Tamarina
Class: Three claps

The sequence shows a fixed relationship between the teacher's verbal cues and the number of claps the class produces. In the follow-up interview, the teacher stated that the school had used this expression for an extended period, although she was unaware of its meaning or origin. The expression is thus treated as a classroom-specific patterned expression, with conventional use recognisable within the school context, despite its unclear lexical meaning.

Vocal and Sound-Based Expressions

The data also included vocal and sound-based forms recognisable as components of specific choral praise routines. Unlike ordinary word-based expressions, these forms do not necessarily convey their intended classroom meaning independently of the routines in which they occur. Their interpretation therefore depends closely on the preceding verbal cues and/or accompanying actions. Table 4 presents these vocal-based patterns.

Table 4: Vocal and Sound-Based Expressions

Routine	**Vocal/Sound Form**	**Description**	**Context of Occurrence**
R1	nywiiiiii	Mosquito sound	Follows Mosquito in the *Mosquito Clap*
R2	mmm… mmmm… mmmm…mwaaaa	Repeated kissing vocalisation	Occurs in *Tumchumu best* (Let us kiss the best)
R7	uwaaa	Vocalisation	Occurs in a superstar clap
R8	waa	Vocalisation	Follows *Hongera* (congratulations) *imara* (strong)
R9	eeh… yeeeeh	Vocalisation	Follows the collective spelling *g-double-o- j-o-b*
R10	fshuu, fshuu; fshuu, fshuu; fshi, fshi, fshi… booom	Fireworks sound effects	Occurs in fireworks clap
R11	chop-chop-chop, wop-wop-wop	Helicopter sound effects	Occurs in a helicopter clap

These vocal forms were treated as vocal resources within the linguistic data because they were systematically produced as part of the praise routines. However, the researcher interpreted their meaning in relation to the surrounding verbal expressions and the classroom context. Accompanying bodily actions, such as miming a mosquito, kissing the palm, spinning the head, or clapping, were treated as contextual resources that helped interpret the vocal forms.

Pragmatic Functions of Choral Praise Expressions

An analysis of the 12 choral praise routines identified four pragmatic functions: recognition of achievement, positive evaluation, celebration of achievement, and encouragement. Although these functions occasionally overlapped, recognition was the most consistently observed function across the routines.

Recognition of Achievement

Recognition of achievement emerged as the most consistently observed pragmatic function across the 12 choral praise routines. In every case, the routine was enacted following a learner's successful performance, such as providing a correct answer, completing a task accurately, or demonstrating the required knowledge or skill. For example, the Mosquito Clap was used after a pupil correctly pronounced *him, her,* and *you,* while '*Tumchumu best*' ('Let us kiss the best') was used after a pupil accurately identified some digestive organs.

(7) Tumchumu best (let us kiss the best)

(School B, T3- Class: 5 -Subject (science)-Lesson: Mfumo wa mmeng'enyo wa chakula (The digestive system)
T3: Nani anaweza kutaja sehemu za mfumo wa chakula tulizojifunza darasa la 4? (Who can mention the digestive system organs we learned in class 4?)
S: kinywa,umio, tumbo, utumbo mwembamba, utumbo mpana, puru (mouth, oesophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, anus)
T3: Amepatia. Tumchumu best (he/she got it right. Let us kiss the best)
Class: mmm…. mmmm (while bending heads side by side over closed hands)
Class: mwaaaa (then kissing the palms and directing them towards the student).

Similarly, *good, better, best* was used after a learner successfully wrote capital letters on the board, and '*g-double-o-j-o-b*' after the successful completion of a fractions task. These routines publicly acknowledged individual learner achievements in front of the whole class. Recognition remained a

consistent function across all 12 routines, although in several instances it co-occurred with positive evaluation, celebration, or encouragement.

Positive Evaluation

Positive evaluation was expressed through terms such as *'good, better, best'*, *'hongera bingwa'* (Congratulations, champion), *'a superstar'*, and *'Amepatia'* (he/she got it right). In R5 (Extract 4), the teacher's statement *'hilo ni jibu sahihi'* (That is the correct answer) performs an assertive function by confirming the correctness of the learner's response. The learners' subsequent expressions *'hongera bingwa'* (Congratulations, champion) and *'leo umeng'aa kama nyota'* (Today you have shone like a star) perform expressive functions by conveying congratulations and admiration. This progression demonstrates how positive evaluation shifts from assessing task performance to affirming the learner.

Celebration of Achievement

In addition, these routines celebrated individual learner achievements as a group. Unlike individual teacher praise, these routines engaged the whole class through coordinated clapping, chanting, vocalisations, and bodily actions. For instance, the Mosquito Clap transformed a pupil's successful pronunciation into a collective performance that included vocalisation, mimed actions, and clapping. The parliamentary clap combined clapping, foot-stamping, and table-banging, while the good, better, best involved shaking bodies, as the extract shows:

(8) Good better best

(School D, T9- Class: 1 -Subject -writing-lesson: Capital letters)
T9: Who can come and write the capital letters for a, b, and d on the board?
S: (Wrote on the board) A, B, D
T9: Let's congratulate him
T9: Good, better, best
Class: good, better, best
Class: shake body…. Body… shake body… Body (shaking body while holding waist)
T9: Again
Students: shake body…Body…shake body…. Body

Through these coordinated responses, an individual learner's achievement became a shared classroom event. Thus, celebration emerged as a collective dimension of choral praise.

Encouragement

Finally, encouragement was evident when praise went beyond recognising a completed achievement to support continued or future performance. The clearest example occurred during the Parliamentary Clap, when learners responded with '*endelea hivyo hivyo, utafika mbali'* ('keep going like this; you will go far'). This expression acknowledges the learner's current success while projecting it into future achievement. Extract (9) illustrates:

(9) Makofi ya Kibunge (Parliamentary Clap)

(School A, T4- Class: 7- Subject: Mathematics- Lesson: Algebra)
T4: (Nani anaweza kuja na kurahisisha swali hili ubaoni?) Who can come to simplify the equation on the board?
S: (volunteered and successfully resolved the mathematical problem).
T4: Makofi matatu ya kibunge (three parliamentary Claps)
Class: Claps three times, stamps feet three times, and bangs tables three times
Class: endelea hivyo hivyo utafika mbali (name) (Keep going like this, you will go far)

Encouragement therefore appeared to serve a more limited pragmatic function than recognition, positive evaluation, and celebration, yet it shows that choral praise could also orient learners towards continued effort and future success.

While certain routines showed chant-like and ritualised characteristics, their classification as choral praise depended on their placement within the interaction following learner participation or successful performance, as well as on their evaluative, congratulatory, celebratory, or encouraging functions.

Discussion

The findings indicate that choral praise in Tanzanian primary school classrooms is linguistically organised through teacher-initiated directives and hortatives, evaluative and congratulatory expressions, repetition, rhythmic patterning, choral spelling, and vocal or sound-based forms. Teachers initiated all twelve routines, showing that choral praise is a structured response to learner achievement, organised through teacher cues that prompt collective participation. The teacher-initiated nature of these routines also reflects the organisation of classroom authority, as teachers determined when collective praise was initiated. Nevertheless, the performance of praise involved learners' coordinated participation, illustrating how teacher-directed interaction and collective expressions of recognition and celebration operated together within the observed routines. This extends classroom discourse research, which has often focused on praise as teacher evaluation, by illustrating how praise can be structured as a collectively produced interactional event. Furthermore, these findings align with research suggesting that the meaning and effects of classroom praise are shaped by its linguistic design and interactional context, rather than by positive wording alone (Brophy, 1981; Waring, 2008).

The findings further demonstrate that choral praise is realised not only through overt evaluative vocabulary. Some expressions convey positive evaluation directly, while others acquire implicit evaluative force through their use within teacher-initiated praise routines. Repetition, rhythmic patterning, choral spelling and vocal forms contribute to this evaluative function by organising collective responses that recognise and celebrate learners' achievements. These results complement interactional studies showing how the linguistic design and sequential organisation of classroom praise influence its interpretation (Waring, 2008; Hosoda & Aline, 2010). The present study expands this perspective by demonstrating how evaluative language and other vocal forms are incorporated into classroom routines jointly performed by teachers and learners.

From a pragmatic perspective, the routines served four primary functions: recognition of achievement, positive evaluation, celebration of achievement, and encouragement. Recognition of achievement was the most consistently observed function, as all twelve routines followed successful learner performance and publicly acknowledged individual achievement. Positive evaluation was evident when expressions assigned favourable value to the learner or performance. Celebration was expressed through collective participation: coordinated clapping, chanting, vocalisations and bodily actions, turning individual achievement into a classroom event. From the perspective of Speech Act Theory, the congratulatory and celebratory expressions performed an expressive function by publicly acknowledging and celebrating learners' achievements through coordinated classroom participation. Although encouragement was less frequent, it occurred when praise extended beyond current achievement to support continued performance. These functions often overlapped, with several routines combining recognition with evaluation, celebration, or encouragement.

Applying Speech Act Theory, these findings show that choral praise comprises multiple communicative acts that operate together within the observed classroom routines. Teacher directives and hortatives structure participation, while evaluative and congratulatory expressions publicly acknowledge and positively characterise learner achievement. Learners' collective responses constitute the interactional fulfilment of teachers' directives and invitations, while also contributing to the collective performance of praise within these routines. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the pragmatic significance of choral praise expressions emerges from their use within the observed classroom routines, where linguistic forms and collective responses work together to accomplish communicative functions.

These findings also deepen understanding of praise in the Tanzanian classroom context. While previous Tanzanian research has examined praise in relation to classroom interaction, politeness, encouragement, and classroom climate, the present study highlights the collective linguistic production of praise. The observed routines show that praise can extend beyond a teacher-learner exchange to become a shared classroom activity through which individual achievement is recognised, evaluated, and celebrated, and at times linked to future performance. Choral praise thus emerges as a distinctive form of classroom language, in which linguistic forms, pragmatic functions, and collective participation combine to construct the social meaning of learner achievement. This understanding contributes to classroom discourse research by showing how praise operates not only as an evaluation of individual learner performance but also as a collectively organised communicative practice through which achievement is publicly recognised and celebrated.

Conclusion

This study highlights choral praise as a distinctive yet relatively underexplored aspect of classroom discourse. Rather than viewing praise solely as a teacher's affirmative response to learner performance, the findings indicate that it constitutes a patterned form of classroom interaction, in which teachers initiate shared responses and learners actively participate in constructing the praise event. The importance of choral praise lies not only in the language used to commend learners but also in how these expressions function within classroom interaction.

The findings further demonstrate the value of analysing classroom praise pragmatically. Expressions that may seem unusual, incomplete, or ambiguous in isolation acquire meaning through their use within specific classroom routines and through the responses they elicit. This highlights the importance of examining classroom language in context rather than interpreting expressions solely by their literal or dictionary meanings. More broadly, this research contributes to classroom discourse studies by foregrounding collective praise as a distinct form of teacher-learner interaction. Choral praise can fulfil both pedagogical and interpersonal functions by acknowledging learner performance, structuring participation, and fostering a shared classroom experience. These findings have implications for teacher education and culturally responsive pedagogy in Tanzania by emphasising the need to understand locally practised choral praise expressions and their communicative functions. The study also provides a basis for further research into locally developed classroom routines and the pragmatic resources teachers and learners use to construct meaning. As the study was conducted in six urban primary schools in Dar es Salaam, its findings reflect the practices observed in these settings and are not intended to represent all Tanzanian primary schools.

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