

## Songs and Language: Children’s Songs and the Learning of Kiswahili in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the use of children’s songs in learning Kiswahili language in Dar es Salaam Tanzania. Usually, songs serve different purposes including transmission of knowledge, values, and language. It argues that children’s songs serve as a means for learning Kiswahili and indigenous culture. The study was conducted at Msewe, Kimara and Changanyikeni nursery schools located in Ubungo municipality of Dar es Salaam. The data was collected using interviews, observations, discussion, and documentation. In this empirical research, the study analysed the Kiswahili songs, lyrics and associated information collected with the children at these schools. With recourse to the participant and arousal theory, the study found that, apart from learning word sounds and singing, songs help children to learn pronunciation and application of words found in songs in their day-to-day communication. The tunes and rhythms of these songs support the children’s acquaintance with Kiswahili words. Furthermore, the songs’ lyrics enables children to construct Kiswahili sentences and structures, thereby enhances their learning of Kiswahili language.

### Keywords:

Children’s songs, language learning, Kiswahili language  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.56279/ummaj.v9i2.3>

### Introduction

In African communities, songs are integral part of cultural heritage of ethnic communities alongside their language, beliefs, values, and norms. Tanzania has more than 120 ethnic groups with diverse songs, languages, values, and norms. Thus, effective understanding of an ethnic group’s songs implies grasping the essence of the cultural spirit that holds people together and which defines their identity. From a cultural perspective, studying songs usually requires observing the relationship between the melodic performance and people’s environment on the one

hand, and songs and word pronunciation in learning language, on the other (Nketia 1974). By examining this relationship, the present study set out to determine how the intermingling of songs, people's environment, and pronunciation of words in language help to create a unified cultural entity that helps to learn the language. A song as a form of culture when incorporated in language in a community (Isaac 2011) can facilitate person-to-person communication. The objective of the study was to examine how children use songs in learning Kiswahili language in Dar es Salaam. Three questions helped to achieve this objective: What factors encourage the use of songs in children's learning of Kiswahili? How do songs sung by children help them learn Kiswahili? What language indicators from the songs children perform facilitate the learning of Kiswahili? Apart from analysis of songs, the paper uses data collected through interviews, observations and focus group discussions.

#### **Participant approach and arousal theory in Songs**

In terms of analytical tools, the article adopts the participant approach and arousal theory in studying how songs sung by children help them to learn Kiswahili language in Dar es Salaam. Brian Schrag and James Krabill proposed the application of a participants' approach that focuses on "people's involvement in the event in terms of roles they play, the ways they interact with each other through time, and how they use the space around them to learn a language" (Schrag & Krabill 2013, p.32). The participant approach entails three aspects: A singer, audience, and the area of performance (Mulokozi 1979). These three aspects are interdependent. A singer sings well when he is in a free performance area that allows people to learn. The audience also joins in performance when the singer motivated them through songs.

Moreover, a free, safe and acceptable area of performance make a singer to sing a song confidently in front of the audience. Therefore, the readiness of singer, motivation of the audience and free, safe and acceptable area of performance are important factors in language learning. The interaction between the singer and the audience through songs help them to learn Kiswahili language. The pronunciation of words, phrases and sentences in singing songs make the participant of the language to learn the language. This approach was applied in analysing the Kiswahili songs performed by children in Tanzanian communities in terms of roles they played and how they performed. It also analysed words, structures, sentences and their

pronunciation used in Kiswahili songs. Moreover, it analysed children interaction with one another and use of songs around them in learning Kiswahili. Children's participation in song performances were based on their singing the call or response part by pronouncing words and identifying structures found in a song's lyrics.

Additionally, this article applies the arousal theory developed initially by Kivy (1989) and extended by DeBellis (1995) to study songs performed by the children in Dar es Salaam. They suggest that song attributed with cultural background arouse a range of emotions among singers and listeners. Specifically, the theory focuses on three features: First, the use of song attributes associated with lyrics. Second, the use of people's song experiences or 'complex state' and roles played in community. Third, expression of emotion or 'central case' associated with the song's language used. Generally, these are songs attributes such as tune or melody, tempo, rhythm, dynamics, form and harmony. Thus, examining these features shows how songs help to arouse a range of emotions in children and help them to learn Kiswahili in Dar es Salaam.

Generally, the performance of a song allows the audience to examine these features in their mental faculties and experience in addition to observing proper feeling obtainable from listening to songs. If a song is good, people normally join in its performance and if it is not up to their taste they abstain from it. The link between the song's properties (P) and people's experience (MS) is important in the expression of emotions. In the application of this theory, three questions emerged: What aspects made the children sing a song? How does the children singing of the songs in Dar es Salaam facilitate their learning of the Kiswahili language? Which indicators help children learn how to pronounce and, ultimately, learn Kiswahili? To generate answers to these questions, the children's songs collected in Dar es Salaam were transcribed to capture and analyse their attributes to show how songs children perform facilitate the learning of Kiswahili in Dar es Salaam.

### **Methodology**

Data for this study was collected from three *chekechea* or kindergarten/pre-schools: Msewe Lutheran, Kimara Roman Catholic and Changanyikeni all based in Ubungo municipality in Dar es Salaam. Ubungo was selected because it has urban characteristics, the real

situation of the children in these areas. The selection of these schools occurred because they had children aged 3 to 6, who did not well understand Kiswahili language. Thus, the inclusion of Children in this study based on the permission of their teachers and parents under principles of children Ethics by UN. The study collected data using interviews, observation, focus group discussion and documentary review. Interviews were held with children, kindergarten/pre-school teachers, parents and relatives. Focus group discussions, on the other hand, were carried out with teachers, parents and relatives of children. Moreover, the researcher observed and documented live performances of Kiswahili songs by the children. The targeted respondents of this research were young children, specifically those attending kindergarten/pre-school, who used songs in their daily activities and they did not well understand the Kiswahili language. The criteria used choose the songs for analysis in this study was that of being performed/sang by children several times and showed signs of contributing to learning of Kiswahili among kindergarten children.

Linguistically, Dar es Salaam is a business hub dubbed a melting pot; therefore, people use different languages predominantly English, French, German, Arabic and Kiswahili to communicate with others. Many people in this Dar es Salaam cosmopolitan city have recourse to Kiswahili language—both an official and national language—in their communication. Moreover, the Kiswahili language has spread to other parts of Africa and the world. Thus, people learn Kiswahili through different methods including song performances. This method helps children involved in the singing process to learn Kiswahili. Through songs performances, Kiswahili language spreads freely and reaches many people relative to written song method for they need the one who knows how to read. As an oral Tanzanian literature, Kiswahili songs are an integral part of African performance that “accompanies different activities” (Isaack 2011, p.64). In Dar es Salaam, people sing the songs while undertaking their activities such as tilling the soil, washing clothes, cleaning their grounds, walking and while playing games. Doing so helps them to learn Kiswahili. Once a song is performed, its melody or tune, rhythm and lyrics usually touch the people’s feelings making them get involved in singing that song. Sometimes, the song’s attributes raise the audience’s emotion and make them respond to the song’s performance

even without knowing its embedded message. Overall, through singing songs people learn the language and culture of a community.

### **Relationship between songs and Kiswahili**

According to John Blacking (2000, p. 7), 'music is man and man is music';<sup>1</sup> therefore, there is a strong relationship between human being and music, in this case songs, as well as songs and language primarily because songs are created using language. Human beings tend to use songs and language in their daily activities. Songs and language help to create human culture, but they are also an integral part of culture. A song is a language because it serves a communication purpose in society. It serves to educate people on different issues, send messages, entertain people, and "bring solidarity, unity, harmony and peace" (Nketia 1992, p. 24). On the other hand, culture supplies people with language, and language provides them with meaning for application in their day-to-day lives. According to Schein (2010, p.3), "culture includes language and music," specifically songs which contain language, rhythmic patterns, tune and melody of an ethnic group. In fact, there is no culture without language and songs without language (ibid.). Thus, a human can create a song to meet his or her social needs such as trekking over long distances, fishing, hunting, digging and entertaining (Gunderson 2010). The function of song differs from one society to another.

In many Tanzania societies, participation in song is divided into two groups. The first, open or loud performance, occurs when a song is performed aloud to enable the audience to participate. Second, a silent or quiet performance occurring when the people understand the song and continue to perform while carrying other activities out in silence. Songs for children are performed either aloud or silently to enable a child to fall asleep. In the field, it emerged that sometimes a child can undertake a certain activity or play a game while singing a song with lyrics in minds. This performance also helps the child to learn some social issues that qualify him/her as a member of the family or society. Generally, songs use language to send a message to the audience. Hence, there is a strong relationship between songs and language.

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<sup>1</sup> By man we mean generic human being.

### **Analysis of Children's Songs**

Generally, songs are created and performed by people comprising a society (Blacking 2000). Songs started during the early stages of human reproduction, specifically infancy. In this regard, Fr. Malema Louis Mwanampepo [interview, 3 February 2019] opined: "*Mama mjamzito anaposikiliza wimbo mzuri unaomfurahisha, hata kiumbe kilichomo tumboni mwake hufurahi.* (When an expectant woman is delighted by a sweet song, even the unborn baby enjoys it). On the contrary, when she is saddened by a song, even the unborn baby also feels bad (Nketia 1974).

According to Nketia (1974), human beings start enjoying songs from the embryo stage. During that stage of life, the embryo recognise some songs' rhythmic patterns listened mostly and enjoyed through its mother. As the womb grows, receptiveness to songs also increases. Once a baby is born, it continues to recognise some tunes and rhythmic patterns enjoyed while in the mother's womb. These song elements continue to thrive with the baby through the stages of sitting, standing, walking and running. From the early stage, these song elements help a baby to respond to the song performances by laughing, clapping, dancing, and singing. As members of family and community in general, a child continues to recognise family songs performed by parents or relatives. These songs shape and help the child interact with its relatives. Moreover, the songs help the kid to recognise rhythmic patterns of a society (Blacking 2000). As the child grows, these rhythmic patterns are emboldened in the mind and enable the child to experience emotion and actively participate in singing and creating children's songs for her/his needs.

The term "children's songs" and "songs for children" are used interchangeably. Generally, songs for children refer to the songs that parents sing for children or those sung by children. Specifically, in Tanzania's societies, these songs are divided into two groups: Songs created by adults particularly parents, youth and relatives, sung or performed for children are specifically known as songs for children; and two, songs sung by children as part of their daily activities are called children songs. The songs for children include lullabies and songs performed during the birth of a child to congratulate the mother. Among the Wasukuma and Wanyamwezi, for example, "*mbina ya mabasa* songs are performed to congratulate a woman who got twins" (Songoyi 1988, pp. 4-5). Another song performed by adults for serving their children are

those encouraged the children to stand up or walk. The second group of songs are the children's songs or those created and performed by children. In most of these songs, their rhythmic patterns, tunes and words are associated with the words that help them to communicate while playing games and dancing (Liwewa 2009; Herbert 2013). Through the songs and games, the children consequently learn the language used in the ethnic group and its attendant culture.

Generally, six songs were collected and analysed related to songs elements used in learning Kiswahili. From the field, it was observed that lullabies are songs mostly performed by parents or relatives for their under-three children. Parents sing these soothing songs for their children. Sometimes, children aged between 3 and 5 sing songs by themselves. The participation of children in these songs is based on the song's performance that touch the children's feelings and make them respond with actions related to the song's message. During fieldwork the researcher noted that, when a child cried, singing a rejoicing song made the child gradually stop crying and if it is a bad or sad song normally s/he continues crying. In this regard, a Msewe Lutheran kindergarten teacher [interview, 3 February 2020] asserted: *Wimbo mzuri ni ule unaomfurahisha mtoto na humfanya atende matendo yanayoelezwa katika ujumbe wa wimbo huo, lakini wimbo asioupenda humchukiza mtoto kiasi cha kutotenda matendo ya ujumbe wa wimbo huo* (A good song is one that makes a child respond to the song's message and the song which is not in the child's taste usually fails to make him respond to the song's message). To her, a good song is the one which makes the child dance, sing or shout with joy or simply rejoice.

### **Melody and language learning**

Regarding what makes a song good or bad and to who depends on people's socio-cultural background. It was evident that melody was one of the song's elements that help to learn Kiswahili language. Melody is a series of pitches that make a song. A good melody makes the people to respond on singing by pronouncing different words. If a person grew up in a culture, normally s/he experiences its melodies. Thus, he/she values songs from her/his cultural experience s/he appreciates songs from her/his cultural background (Kidula 2013).

Moreover, DeBellis (1995, pp. 55-56) suggested that "song's attributes associated with cultural background arouse a range of emotions among the singers and listeners that make people to judge a song." If the song's

taste stirs people's emotion, it is a good melody and normally people join in the song's performance but if it is not to their taste they abstain from partaking in it. Implicitly, the involvement of children in a song's performances and learning Kiswahili is tied to emotion a melody evokes. This melody enforced co-operation between language and song lies at the "heart of the song on how speech tone related to melodic contour" (Agawu 2003, p.112). During fieldwork, it emerged that, through singing Kiswahili songs children learned different words that boosted their capacity to use the language in their daily lives. The following song attests to this orientation:



Figure 1: Kasimama Peke Yake

**English translation:**

S/he stood alone,  
S/he saw her mother.

During an interview held on 15 February 2020, a teacher of Msewe Lutheran kindergarten said that parents or relatives performed this song for their children to motivate the baby to stand up and learn how to speak Kiswahili: *Wimbo huu mara nyingi huimbiwa watoto wanaofikia hatua ya kusimama* (Usually this song is performed when a child starts learning how to stand up). At this stage, the main performer is a parent or relative as a child listens and responds to actions related to the song's message.

I observed in the field that the mother started singing the song while looking at her child and the child looking at her. She sang the song for the first time as the call and repeated it second time as the response. She did so several times until the child responded by laughing and clapping before joining in the singing using the onomatopoeia (a formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named or pronounced) sound "o, o, o, o". Through singing onomatopoeia, a child learns the song's tune and how to pronounce word, in this case the vowel 'o'.

Initially, when the mother starts to sing this song, she also tries to assist her baby to stand up because she is unable to do so unaided. But as days

progress once the mother sings this song the baby stands up immediately and sings after her 'a-a-a-a', and, sometimes, 'o-o-o-o', other times pronouncing syllables 'ma-ma-ma-ma' and 'ba-ba-ba-ba'. She also learned how to pronounce vowels such as 'a', 'o' and syllables 'ma' and 'ba,' which helps a child to create words such as 'mama' and 'baba'. Generally, the song helps the child to learn Kiswahili by attempting to pronounce different vowels and words.

### **Tempo and language learning**

From the field, the study observed that tempo is the song's element helped the child to learn Kiswahili language. Tempo is the speed or pace of song. It determines the speed of song specifically how to pronounce a word, the type of beats the word's syllables have and how the notes of each syllable connected to another to make a word sound properly. Through singing Kiswahili songs in appropriate tempo, the child "learned the meaning of the song's words" (Michael & Swee 2013, p. 129). Understanding the words' meanings is a major factor in communication that gives the learner freedom in learning how to speak a language. As such, singing Kiswahili songs coupled with actions related to words pronounced helped the child to associate the words s/he sang with the action done triggered by the song. This connection between the word and action gave the learner the word's meaning as the following song illustrates:



Figure 2: Baba huyoo [There Goes Father]

#### **English translation:**

That is (our) father,  
That is (our) father,  
(He) came from Rwanda,  
with a bunch of bananas.

During a discussion on 15 April 2020, a Changanyikeni kindergarten teacher, aged 30, said that many Kiswahili songs were sung by children

while undertaking different actions. These actions helped them to associate the word pronounced and the attendant action triggered by the song. She said, the song 'Baba huyo' was used to teach children how to receive the parents' gifts. Originally, the parents or relatives sang this song to teach children about their responsibilities.

As she continues to sing, the child also sings the song while associating it with its pronounced word, for example, 'baba' with the person its mother was pointing at—the 'father'. She also sings 'ndiji' while pointing at 'a bunch of bananas.' As the song is being sang many times in different days, the child also manages to associate the words s/he sings with their meanings as a Changanyikeni pre-school teacher said: *Kutokana na kuimba wimbo huu mara nyingi mtoto ameweka kumbukumbu ya wimbo akilini mwake na hurweza kuhusianisha neno 'baba' na maana yake. Mara anapomuona baba yake huimba 'ba-ba', mpaka anapombeba baba yake* (By singing this song many times, the child permanently memorised the song and, therefore, connected the word with its meaning. Once his father comes, he sings 'ba-ba' until he holds him). From a stakeholders' point-of-view, the children's songs play crucial roles in the teaching of Kiswahili in Dar es Salaam. Generally, the performance of this song materialised by improvising words while maintaining the song's beats and word's accents. In other words, the baby noted the changes of word sang by the mother, which forced it to change a word as its mother sang.

### **Rhythmic patterns and language learning**

Learning Kiswahili through songs was not only evident in word meanings but also in word rhythmic patterns, which help the pronunciation of words correctly. Rhythm refers to how long or short a word sound is. The combination of word's syllables sounds or rhythmic patterns help the pronunciation of word. Once the children sing the song they also learn how to apply the rhythmic patterns of the word. These words' rhythmic patterns enabled the children to use different words in Kiswahili as the following song illustrates:



Figure 3: Sare Maua

**English translation:**

Resemblance is colourful,  
Whoever does not know to choose,  
S/he is a Mzigua [an ethnic group].

This song was performed by the children aged 3 – 5 years from Kimara Roman Catholic pre-school on 17 March 2019. They sang this song while performing some actions. A leader led the song by singing “*sare sare...*” [uniform × 2] while pointing to two other children with similar shirts in red colour. Others replied by indicating the last word of each line “*maua*” [flower] while pointing to one another. The leader continued to sing other lines with other children replying by singing the last word of the line up to the end of the song. When the song ended, the child who pointed last was responsible for telling others about the words *maua* [flower] and *kuchagua* [choosing]. Sometimes, they were responsible for answer questions asked about *sare* [uniform], *maua* [flowers], and *kuchagua* [choosing].

This song helped the child to understand the words' rhythms through singing. When the song was sung, the children learned to pronounce the words ‘*sare*’, ‘*maua*’, ‘*kuchagua*’, and ‘*kabila*’. Through rhythmic patterns, the words pronounced by the children helped them to sing the song. On the other hand, the song helped the children to learn the questioning structure through the song's rhythm. When the performance took place, the leader sang the question part e.g. ‘*sare*-- and majority responded ‘*maua*’. The numerous repetitions of the song made the children understand how to lead and respond to the questions through singing. As a result, they were able to construct different sentences and structures using the words' rhythms of the song.

Through singing this song, the children learn Kiswahili by pronouncing words and creating different structures such as *nani hajui kuchagua shati?* [Who does not know how to choose a shirt?]. The answer had to do with the children dressed in shirts resembling in colour. The song seeks to mobilise children towards asking questions and responding by providing short answers through singing. The song also encouraged the children to pronounce and construct structures. All these song aspects helped the children learn Kiswahili or reinforce their linguistic skills in the language.

**Dynamics and language learning**

Through observation, it emerged that dynamics refer to the song's element that help to learn language. Dynamics is the volume level of a song. When a word or sentence is sung loud or soft it presents a certain mood or meaning in language. This can be politeness or question sound. Learning Kiswahili in Tanzania through songs' dynamics usually depends on the people's involvement in events through the roles they play, "how they interact with each other" (Brian Schrag et al. 2013, p.32). Once they participated in the song performances, they learned Kiswahili that help them to interact with others through structures embedded in Kiswahili songs. Within these structures, people learn about the culture of a society specifically, the way people greet one another. The song "Niamkapo Asubuhi" [when I wake up in the morning] shows how Kiswahili structures the children's song teaching them how to greet elders in the polite language while interacting with others.

Ni - a - m - ka - po - a - su - bu - hi - ni - na - wa - sa - li - mu - wa - za - zi - shi -

5  
ka - mo - ba - ba - shi - ka - mo - ma - ma - hi - yo - ndi - yo - ta - bi - a - nje - ma.

Figure 4: Niamkapo Asubuhi

**English translation:**

When I wake up in the morning,  
I greet my parents:  
Good morning Father,  
Good morning Mother,  
That is a good behaviour.

This song was performed on 18/04/2020 by Changanyikeni pre-school children aged 3 - 5 years. In line three and four, the song teaches the children how to greet parents and elders. The song performers played two distinct roles—that of children and parents. The children greet their parents and the parents respond, accordingly. Through such singing, children learned how to greet elders and behave as family members. In many societies in Tanzania, it is a good behaviour for children to greet their parents and elders when they wake up. Through greetings the

children interact with parents and vice-versa. This make children be more aware of “the culture and values of the society including language” (Hall-Heimbecker 2013, p. 234).

### Forms and language learning

Kiswahili songs, as the other songs in Africa and the world generally, contain grammatical language (Legère 2013) that makes song sentences sound clear while they are sung. In fact, the link between song properties specifically form and melody shape, and people’s experience is important in the construction of Kiswahili sentences that arouse people’s emotion. Form is the arrangement of different pitches that make parts or structures of song. These structures are arranged according to language used. Once they sing a Kiswahili song, they also learn different structures and sentences in Kiswahili. In this regard, the song *Shule naipenda* performed on 16/02/2020 by Msewe Roman Catholic pre-school illustrates this point, with the following lyrics:

Shu le na i pe nda shu le aa. Ki u no cha ngu che mba mba

cha ku va li a m ka nda aa, shu le na i pe nda shu le aa.

Figure 5: Shule Naipenda

#### English translation:

I like school, school aaa x 2.  
my slim waist,  
for wearing belt aaa x 2.

In this song, the leaders sing the first line with the response group repeating the same line in unison. As they sing the first line, they also clap. When they sing the second line, everyone touches one’s waist with two hands and dances by twisting his/her waist with the head shifting right and then left. The song is repeated several times as the singers improvise the second line: *Miguu yangu myembamba ya kuvalia viatu shule aa* [My legs

are slender for wearing shoes aa]. Sometimes, they use an alternative phrase: *Mkoba wangu mwembamba wakubebea daftari shule aa* [My schoolbag is slender for carrying exercise-books]. The song helps to teach names of things people wear. It also helps the children to associate the human organs and things people wear. For example, *kiuno* (waist) is associated with *mkanda* (belt), *miguu* (legs) with *viatu* (shoes), *mkoba* (school-bag) with carrying exercise-books.

On the other hand, the song's form helps the children to learn Kiswahili grammar and vocabulary such as *kiuno* [waist], *chembamba* [slender], *kuvalia* [for wearing] and *mkanda* [belt]. Through this song, the children learn Kiswahili structure agreements in noun classes in class 7: **ki-ch-che-cha** in *kiuno changu chembamba cha kuvalia mkanda*; class 4: **mi-ya-mi-ya** in *Miguu yangu miembemba ya kuvalia viatu*. The song's form also helps the children construct different sentences using the following structure: N-, Poss-ADJ-, size-ADJ, ASS-a, -V, -N, like in *mkoba* (N) *wangu* (Poss-ADJ) *mwembamba* (siz ADJ) *wa* (ASS-a) *kubebea* (V) *daftari* (N) and *miguu yangu myembembe... ya kuvalia viatu*. Generally, the song also helps the children learn the correct usage of Kiswahili grammar.

### **Harmony and language learning**

Another song's element examined during fieldwork was harmony. Harmony is a sound produced during the performance of two or more pitches at the same time to form a chord. In this study, the harmony was evident in the sounds used to count numbers at the same time learn their words in Kiswahili. Moreover, they learn numbers in Kiswahili while recreating the language's structures. These were noted through the song entitled: "*Naweza kuhesabu namba*" [I can count with numbers], which was performed on 17/3/2019 by the children of Kimara pre-school. The performers aged 3 - 5 years sing the following song:

Na - we-za-ku-he-sa - bu-na-mba - mo-ja-mbi-li - ta-tu - na - ta tu.

n - ne - ta - no - si - ta - sa - ba - na - ne - ti - sa - ku -mi.

ku-mi, vi - do-le-vya-m-ko - no-wa-ngu - ju-mla-ya-ke - ta-no - vi -  
 vi - do-le-vya-mi-ko - no-ya-ngu - ju-mla-ya-ke - - ku-mi. Hu-ku  
 vi - do-le-vya-m-gu - u - wa-ngu - ju-mla-ya-ke - ta-no - vi -  
 vi - do-le-vya-mi-gu - u - ya-ngu - ju-mla-ya-ke - - ku-mi. Hu-ku

ta - no - na - hu - ku - ta - no - ju - mla - ya - ke - ku - mi.  
 ta - no - na - hu - ku - ta - no - ju - mla - ya - ke - ku - mi.

Figure 6: Naweza Kuhesabu Namba

**English translation:**

I can count with numbers, one, two, three. x 2  
 four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. x 2  
 The sum of fingers of my hand is five.  
 The sum of toes of my leg is five.  
 The sum of fingers of my hands is ten.  
 The sum toes of [both] my legs is ten.  
 In this side five and this side five  
 The sum is ten

During the performance, the children's singing is coupled with action. When they utter the word "moja" in the first verse they point with one finger, for "mbili" they indicate with two fingers, and for "tatu" they indicate three fingers. They continue to do this up to 10. When they sing the leader led a song by singing the first verse while others repeated the same verse with the same voice in response. They sing the song in unison and "shared lyrics and structure" (Yung 2019, p.4). Sometimes, they sing in two voices, with some singing the melody while others sing its parallel

lower in the six or third. When the song concludes, the leader assumes the role of a teacher and asks them several questions pertaining to the song and others respond, accordingly, as pupils. If a pupil fails to answer the question, the 'teacher' requires him/her to lead the song again and the song game and performance resumes.

Through the song, children learn how to count numbers in Kiswahili. The song also helps them to do mathematics by adding and subtracting numbers in Kiswahili. Through this song, the children also acquire knowledge on counting numbers and Kiswahili language usage.

### **Conclusion**

This article has established that Tanzanian children's songs support their learning of Kiswahili through song performances based on different aspects. The children's emotion raised by the songs and cultural background are among the factors that make them sing and use these songs in learning Kiswahili in Dar es Salaam. The link between song properties and people's experience is vital in expressing emotions that make the children to engage in singing songs and learning Kiswahili. Through singing, the children pronounced different words that enable them to apply Kiswahili in their activities. The words *sare*, *maua* and *asiyejua kuchagua* were learnt by the children through singing the song 'Sare'. Moreover, singing the song such as 'Niamkapo asubuhi', teaches the children how to greet the parents and elders in the society through the song's lyrics, *Shikamoo baba, shikamoo mama*. During the song performance, the children sing this song in dialogue style that makes them interact with others. Conversely, the study has demonstrated how song performances were used in learning Kiswahili structure. By participating in songs, the children managed to pronounce, create words and construct sentences using Kiswahili structure. Evidently, in the children song, 'Shule naipenda' sang by Msewe Roman Catholic pre-school, the children pronounced and used the following Kiswahili structure *...kiuno change chembamba....., ...kiatu change chembamba ....* Through singing these structures, the children learn how to construct other sentences by using these structures. As the song is a part of culture, once it used to teach Kiswahili it also cultivates Tanzanian culture among the children through the tune, rhythm, harmony and words in use. When a Kiswahili song was sung, the children used Kiswahili accents and tones to pronounce the lyrics. The syllables' accents make the words pronounced by the children while singing the song to sound in Kiswahili tones. Additionally, singing

the children songs in call and response parts makes the children to interact with each other and develop the Kiswahili language and culture of a society. The study reveals that the songs performed by the children from Changanyikeni, Kimara and Msewe pre-schools bring about solidarity, harmony and unity in schools and society.

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