Extensiveness of Classroom Exercise on Enhancing Pupils' Mastery of 3Rs in Public Primary School in Mkalama District, Tanzania

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Abstract
This study examined the extent to which classroom exercises enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs (Reading, writing and Arithmetic) in public primary schools in Mkalama District, Tanzania. The Assessment for Learning Theory guided the study. The study employed a convergent design under a mixed-methods research approach. The target population comprised 97 public primary schools, 777 teachers, 97 academic teachers, and 24,276 pupils in Standards Two to Four. A total of 540 respondents, were selected using simple random, criterion-purposive, and stratified random sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires, achievement tests, interviews guide and document analysis guide. The research instruments were validated by research experts, and Cronbach Alpha was used to ensure the reliability of Likert scale items in the questionnaires with a coefficient of 0.834, for the achievement tests of standards two, three, and four reliability was determined by the split-half method, with yields of 0.82, 0.87, and 0.81, respectively while for the qualitative data was ensured through peer debriefing and data triangulation. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data with aid of SPSS version 27, whereas qualitative data were analysed thematically. The study found that classroom exercises enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs to a moderate extent by enhancing reading fluency, writing accuracy, letter formation, spelling, and basic numeracy skills through regular practice. The study concludes that classroom exercises actively enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs skills through regular reading practice, writing activities, corrective feedback, and repeated arithmetic problem-solving tasks.

Keywords: Classroom exercises, 3Rs mastery, Assessment for Learning, literacy, numeracy

1. Introduction

The mastery of the 3Rs reading, writing, and arithmetic is a fundamental goal of primary education because these competencies provide the foundation upon which pupils acquire, communicate, and apply knowledge across different subjects (UNESCO,2023). In the context of primary education, reading involves decoding and understanding written text, writing involves forming words and sentences to communicate ideas, and arithmetic involves performing basic numerical operations and applying them to everyday problems (UNICEF, 2022). The mastery of these foundational competencies remains a central objective of primary education worldwide, and classroom exercises have emerged as important and relatively cost-effective instructional strategies for strengthening 3Rs mastery (UNESCO, 2023). Classroom exercises include structured learning activities such as reading drills, writing exercises, worksheets, group tasks, and arithmetic practice problems conducted under teachers' guidance. (OECD, 2023). Evidence from cognitive science further indicates that appropriately structured and repeated practice can strengthen memory retention and support the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2023). Thus, in primary education, classroom exercises are particularly important because they provide repeated opportunities for pupils to apply reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, thereby supporting the progressive development and mastery of the 3Rs.

Globally, reading, writing, and arithmetic are recognized as foundational competencies for subsequent learning, and Sustainable Development Goal 4.1 emphasizes the need for all children to achieve relevant and effective learning outcomes, including proficiency in reading and mathematics, by 2030 (United Nations, 2025). However, international evidence indicates that a large proportion of children in low- and middle-income countries do not acquire these foundational skills even after spending years in primary school. The World Bank et al. (2022) estimated that approximately 70% of children in low- and middle-income countries experience learning poverty, meaning that they are unable to read and understand a simple age-appropriate text by the age of 10. This situation has serious consequences for children's educational progression because pupils who cannot read with understanding, write meaningfully, or perform basic arithmetic may struggle to access the content of other subjects, complete classroom tasks, and acquire more advanced knowledge and skills. Weak foundational literacy and numeracy can therefore contribute to poor academic achievement, repetition of grades, school disengagement, and increased risk of dropping out, while also limiting learners' capacity to participate effectively in social and economic activities later in life (World Bank et al., 2022). The persistence of learning poverty has consequently shifted international attention from merely ensuring school enrolment to ensuring that children actually acquire foundational competencies. In response, organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF have emphasized evidence-based approaches to improving foundational learning, including structured teaching, systematic practice, teacher guidance, and regular assessment of learners' progress (UNESCO, 2024; UNICEF, 2023). Evidence from education systems that have achieved relatively strong learning outcomes also highlights the importance of systematic instruction, adequate opportunities for practice, and timely feedback in developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills (OECD, 2023). Therefore, when children fail to acquire the ability to read, write, and perform basic arithmetic during the primary-school years, the consequences extend beyond immediate classroom performance; such deficiencies can undermine their ability to learn across the curriculum,

progress successfully through subsequent grades, and develop the competencies required for further education and participation in society.

In Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, inadequate mastery of foundational reading and numeracy skills remains a major educational challenge, providing a strong justification for investigating classroom practices that can improve pupils' 3Rs competencies. Evidence from the World Bank and its partner organizations indicates that learning poverty is exceptionally high in Sub-Saharan Africa. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 86% of children in the region were estimated to be unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10, and the estimated rate increased to about 89% following the pandemic-related disruption to education (World Bank et al., 2022). This evidence demonstrates that the problem is not simply lack of access to primary schooling, but also the failure of many pupils to acquire foundational competencies while attending school. UNICEF further reports that in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one in ten children acquire foundational reading and numeracy skills at the expected time, while globally only about 30% of children attending Grade 3 in half of the countries examined demonstrated foundational reading skills and only 18% demonstrated foundational numeracy skills (UNICEF, 2022). These deficiencies have important consequences for pupils' educational progression because children who do not acquire basic reading skills are likely to experience difficulties accessing learning materials, understanding instructions, and acquiring knowledge in other curriculum areas; similarly, weak numeracy limits their ability to solve mathematical problems and apply quantitative knowledge in everyday situations (World Bank, 2022). In response to this challenge, structured pedagogical approaches have increasingly been promoted in African education systems. For example, the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach groups pupils according to their actual learning levels rather than their grade placement and provides targeted instruction and practice in foundational literacy and numeracy. Evidence synthesized by the World Bank indicates that approaches that combine assessment of learning levels with targeted instruction and increased opportunities for practice can improve foundational learning outcomes (World Bank, 2023).

In Tanzania, improving the quality of primary education remains a national priority. The Education Sector Development Plan (2021–2026) emphasizes learner-centred pedagogy and continuous assessment as key strategies for raising educational standards (URT, 2021). The Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014, updated in 2023, emphasizes the development of the 3Rs in reading, writing, and arithmetic during the years of primary education. National education policies underscore the importance of the 3Rs in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic as essential for primary school pupils (URT, 2023). Despite these policy initiatives, challenges persist in achieving the desired proficiency levels among primary school pupils. The URT, (2023) indicate that most pupils complete primary education without mastering the essential 3Rs in reading and writing (URT, 2023).

Assessment findings from the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) highlight substantial deficiencies in pupils' mastery of the 3Rs. While 36.20% of Standard Two pupils demonstrated strong reading proficiency, approximately 33.16% performed poorly, reading fewer than twelve words. Writing skills were notably weaker, with only 16.32% achieving high proficiency, and the majority struggling with uppercase letters (64.34%) and punctuation (58.22%). Similarly, numeracy performance was inadequate, with 60.72% of pupils

failing to identify number sequences and over 43% encountering difficulties with subtraction and problem-solving tasks (URT, 2023). Regional disparities further intensify these challenges, Dar es Salaam recorded the highest performance with an overall mastery rate of 90.46%, whereas regions such as Singida, Katavi, and Simiyu performed significantly below the national average. In Singida, only 46.07% of pupils demonstrated proficiency in reading and writing, and mastery of arithmetic was as low as 37.9%, below the national average level (URT, 2023).

Within this context, Mkalama District in Singida Region provides a critical setting for examining pupils' mastery of the 3Rs. The district was selected due to its relatively large number of primary schools and the high proportion of pupils experiencing learning difficulties in mastering the 3Rs (Reading, writing, and arithmetic), as shown in the following data (URT, 2023).

Table 1.

Statistics of Pupils of Standard II up to Standard IV with Poor Mastery in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic in Mkalama District

Year	Number of pupils enrolled			Number of Pupils with 3Rs Mastering Skills Problems		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
2022	12,641	12,161	24,802	719	489	1,208
2023	12,499	12,047	24,546	1,001	568	1,569
2024	12,181	11,579	24,095	943	640	1,577
2025	12,346	11,930	24,276	946	670	1,616

Source: District Education Office (DEO), 2025; URT, 2022; URT, 2023; URT,2024.

Table 1 indicates the number of primary school pupils with problems in mastering the 3Rs in writing, Reading, and arithmetic in Standard Two to Standard Four in the Mkalama District. The statistics show that the number of pupils with problems in mastering the 3Rs has increased from 2022 to 2025. The presence of these pupils is among the considerations for this study to investigate the extent to which the use of pupils' classroom exercises enhances pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in public primary schools in Mkalama District, Tanzania, which may provide knowledge that can be generalized to other districts and Regions to enhance 3Rs Mastery.

2. Statement of the Problem

The inadequacy of mastery of the 3Rs among primary school pupils in the lower grades is a problem in the Mkalama District that affect the academic progress of pupils in which the 2024 National 3Rs Assessment showed that 21.08% of Standard Two up to standard four pupils had not achieved the expected reading competency, 30.37% had not attained the required writing competency, and 37.44% had not mastered the expected arithmetic competency (URT,2025). The situation has led various stakeholders concern about the inadequacy of mastery of the 3Rs; parents, teachers, and education officers have expressed concern through the School Quality Assurance that children who have completed Standard Three cannot read Kiswahili storybooks or perform simple arithmetic (NECTA, 2024. The problem at Mkalama, if left unattended, would leave most pupils with low self-esteem, a lack of confidence, and a dependence on others to interpret written information. Finally, it could lead to fewer pupils completing basic education.

The studies by Heriel (2025), Badi and Maliganya (2024), and Nyamizi, Ndomba, and Mwamakula (2025) have examined the Influence of teacher professional development, learning

environment, and instructional challenges on pupils' acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in primary education. However, these studies have largely focused on broader pedagogical practices, environmental conditions, and systemic constraints, with limited attention to the specific role of pupils' classroom exercises as an independent instructional strategy in enhancing mastery of reading, writing, and arithmetic skills in primary schools. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the extent to which the use of pupils' classroom exercises enhances pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in public primary schools in Mkalama District, Tanzania.

3. Research Question

To what extent does the use of pupils' classroom exercises lead to pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in public primary schools in the Mkalama District?

4. Significance of the Study

The study's findings are expected to inform primary school stakeholders, such as teachers, pupils, and education officers, about the role of classroom exercises in enhancing pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in primary education. For teachers, the study provides a practical understanding of which types and frequencies of classroom exercises are most effective for teaching Reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the education officer, the findings helped to guide school leaders in supervising and supporting teachers in planning and conducting effective classroom activities. In addition, the findings are expected to inform assessment experts and education policymakers in reviewing and strengthening teacher training programs, curriculum implementation, and assessment policies, including the 3Rs program, as well as resource allocation in primary education. Furthermore, the study's findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge in educational assessment by focusing specifically on the mastery of the 3Rs in early schooling. The findings expand understanding of how classroom exercises on assessment for learning theory operate in real-world classroom settings, particularly in helping pupils master the 3Rs.

5. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Assessment for Learning Theory (AFL), which was formally conceptualized and popularized by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998) through their influential research review titled "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment" (1998). The principles of Assessment for Learning emphasize the use of assessment as a continuous and interactive process that guides both teaching and learning. At the core of AFL is the need for clear learning intentions and success criteria, ensuring that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and what quality work looks like. Building on this clarity, teachers engage pupils through effective classroom dialogue and questioning**,** which help uncover learners' understanding and misconceptions (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Finally, timely, specific, corrective, and improvement-focused feedback move learning forward.

Assessment for Learning Theory has some limitations in explaining the wider contextual factors that influence mastery of the 3Rs among primary school pupils. The theory primarily emphasizes processes occurring within the classroom, including learning intentions, questioning, formative assessment, feedback, learner participation, and the use of assessment evidence to modify teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Consequently, it provides limited explanation of factors that exist beyond the immediate classroom environment but can substantially influence pupils' ability to benefit from assessment practices. For example, the

home environment, the availability of school resources, including textbooks, exercise books, classrooms, teaching aids, libraries, and adequate numbers of teachers, can affect the extent to which teachers are able to conduct regular assessment, provide individualized feedback, and give pupils sufficient opportunities for practice

Theory has several strengths, but the core strength of AFL is the emphasis on practice combined with feedback: learning occurs not just through exercise, but through feedback loops. For the 3Rs, this means that a pupil who participates in classroom exercises must receive specific and timely correction from the teachers. Another strength is that it positions exercises as tools for diagnosis and adjustment that teachers should use in classroom exercises to identify learning gaps during instruction, not at the end of the term. (Black & Wiliam, 1998). AFL also builds pupils' confidence and motivation by presenting assessment as supportive rather than corrective, and it allows early identification of learning gaps, ensuring timely intervention and preventing long-term learning difficulties.

6. Review of Empirical Study

This section focused on empirical review on the extent to which the use of pupils' classroom exercises influences the pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in public primary schools, as examined below;

Wahyuni et al. (2025) studied Strategies for the development of pupils' well-being: the task-oriented classroom approach in Indonesia. The study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional design with a sample of 1,698 students (676 male and 994 female). Random sampling was employed to ensure every student had an equal chance of being selected to reduce bias. Data collection was done using a questionnaire. After administering the questionnaire, the data were analysed using regression. The results indicate that task orientation could enhance student well-being in classroom learning practices and support teacher development, thereby improving teachers' professional ability to facilitate learning. The study provides valuable insights for future research by highlighting the importance of task conditions in promoting pupils' learning, thereby informing broader educational strategies. However, the study overlooks another role of formative assessment in helping students master the 3Rs in writing, Reading, and arithmetic. Therefore, the current study focuses on classroom exercises that lead to mastery of the 3Rs among primary pupils in the early grades.

Teng (2023) conducted a study on the effects of word-focused exercises on second language (L2) vocabulary acquisition among Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study employed a quantitative experimental design involving 270 Chinese EFL students. Data were collected using a validated self-regulated vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire, reading tasks with three word-focused exercise conditions, immediate vocabulary post-tests, and measures of working memory and English proficiency. The data were analysed using statistical techniques to compare the effectiveness of the three instructional conditions and examine the predictive influence of learner-related variables. After data analysis, the study found that sentence-writing activities produced the highest vocabulary learning gains, followed by gap-fill exercises and marginal glosses. The findings further revealed that self-regulated vocabulary learning strategies, English proficiency, and working memory significantly influenced

vocabulary acquisition. The study provides valuable empirical evidence that writing activities that require learners to use target words in meaningful sentences are more effective at promoting vocabulary development than receptive word-focused exercises. However, the study was conducted among Chinese EFL learners in a second-language learning context and focused specifically on vocabulary acquisition rather than broader writing skills in primary education. Therefore, the current study was examined how classroom writing exercises contribute to pupils' vocabulary use in written expression within the context of mastering the 3Rs in Tanzanian.

Syarifuddin and Atweh (2022) conducted a study on the Use of the Activity, Classroom Discussion, and Exercise (ACE) Teaching Cycle to improve students' engagement in learning elementary linear algebra in Indonesia. The study used a mixed-methods design, and the participants were 37 students selected through random and purposive sampling. The data were collected through focus group discussions, classroom observations, and a questionnaire, and analysed using Thematic analysis. After data analysis, the study found that Students' involvement in the ACE teaching cycle approach in the Elementary Linear Algebra course improved their engagement in mathematics learning across the cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains. The study provides insight into the use of the mixed-methods design, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of how students interact with learning activities. However, the study provides limited evidence on how the qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated to produce a comprehensive interpretation of students' engagement. Therefore, the current study address these by clearly aligning each research instrument with an appropriate analytical procedure, using statistical analysis for quantitative questionnaire data and thematic analysis for qualitative interview and focus-group data.

Sadick (2025) examined the impact of school quality assurance strategies on improving the competencies of Grade Three learners in reading, writing, and arithmetic in public primary schools in Igunga District, Tanzania. The study employed a mixed-methods approach under a convergent research design, involving 175 respondents who were selected through a combination of random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, while quantitative data were analysed statistically and qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The findings further indicated that effective school leadership, teacher professional development, and community involvement strengthened the implementation of quality assurance practices and contributed to improved learning outcomes. The study concluded that quality assurance strategies are important in enhancing learners' 3Rs competencies, although their sustained effectiveness depends on adequate educational resources, continuous teacher professional development, and strong leadership support. The study provides empirical evidence on how school quality assurance strategies contribute to improving Grade Three learners' competencies in reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs) in Tanzanian public primary schools. However, the study focused broadly on school quality assurance and the three foundational competencies of reading, writing, and arithmetic, rather than specifically examining how classroom-based writing exercises influence pupils' vocabulary use and written expression. Therefore, the current study seeks to examine how classroom writing exercises contribute to pupils' vocabulary use in written expression within the context of mastering the 3Rs in Tanzanian primary schools.

Stanslaus and Msoroka (2022) conducted a study on the Influence of the learning environment on the mastery of learning skills in Public Primary Schools in Nyang'hwale District, Tanzania. The study investigated factors affecting pupils' acquisition of the 3Rs competencies using a mixed-methods approach. This study involved 106 participants. They included students, teachers, Head Teachers, and District Educational Officers, who were sampled through stratified random and purposive sampling, with data collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Analysis with SPSS and thematic techniques revealed that pupils exhibited poor mastery of the learning skills**.** After data analysis, the study found that primary school pupils had poor mastery of the 3Rs. Most primary school pupils were found to have poor mastery of the 3Rs. In addition, the findings indicate that the teaching and learning environment significantly influenced mastery of the 3Rs among primary school pupils. The study provides empirical evidence on how contextual and environmental factors shape learning outcomes in primary education. Nonetheless, it inadequately isolates the specific contribution of routine classroom exercises to skill acquisition. Therefore, the present study was focus more explicitly on classroom exercises as a central instructional strategy influencing pupils' mastery of the 3Rs.

7. Methodology

This study employed a convergent design under a mixed-methods approach. The target population of the study was 25,247, comprising 24,276 pupils from Classes Two to Four, 777 teachers, 97 academic teachers, and 97 public primary schools. A sample comprising 366 pupils, 154 teachers, 10 academic teachers, and 10 public primary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select public primary schools, stratified random sampling was used to select pupils and teachers, while criterion purposive sampling was used to select academic teachers. Questionnaires, a document analysis guide, interview guides, and achievement tests were used to collect data. The instruments were validated by three research experts in Educational Assessment and Evaluation from Mwenge Catholic University. A pilot study was conducted involving one public primary school, 14 teachers, 36 pupils, and 1 academic teacher who were not included in the main study. Reliability of the Likert-scale questionnaire items was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.834. The achievement tests for Classes Two, Three, and Four obtained by split-half method with reliability of 0.82, 0.87, and 0.81, respectively, indicating good reliability. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, percentages, and means, with the aid of SPSS version 27, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, avoidance of plagiarism, and adherence to established research ethical principles.

9. Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to examine the extent to which the use of pupils' classroom exercises leads to the pupils' mastery of the 3Rs in primary schools in Mkalama District, Tanzania. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to teachers, an interview guide administered to academic teachers, and a document analysis guide that reviewed classroom exercise documents. A five-point Likert scale was used for data analysis, ranging from Very Small Extent (VSE) to Very High Extent (VHE). The rate of Percentage described as < 20 = Extremely minority, 20 -29 = Very Low Majority, 30 -39 = Low Minority, 40 – 49 = minority, 50 – 59 = Moderate, 60 – 69 = Majority, 70 -79 = High Majority, 80 – 89 = Very High Majority, 90 – 99 = Extremely Majority,

100 = Overwhelming Majority (Taherdoost,2019). To measure the extent, the results were analysed using the mean score criteria developed by Chyung and Hutchinson (2023), where the mean score range is 1.00–1.99 Very Small Extent, 2.00 –2.99 Small Extent, 3.00 –3.99 Moderate Extent, 4.00– 4.49 Large Extent, and 4.50 –5.00 Very Large Extent. Table 4.4 presents the summary of the findings from the teachers' questionnaire. A summary of teachers' responses is presented in Table 2

Table 2

The Extent to Which the Use of Pupils' Classroom Exercises Leads to the Pupils' Mastery of the 3Rs in Primary Schools

	Statement	VSE		SE		M		HE		VHE		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean
i	Classroom reading exercises help pupils develop word recognition skills	0	0	10	7.8	45	34.9	50	38.8	24	18.6	3.68
ii	Reading tasks given in class improve pupils' comprehension of short texts	0	0	8	6.2	40	31	55	42.6	26	20.2	3.77
iii	Feedback from reading exercises supports pupils in correcting their reading errors	0	0	12	9.3	42	32.6	50	38.8	25	19.4	3.68
iv	Regular reading exercises enhance pupils' ability to read fluently	0	0	9	7	38	29.5	54	41.9	28	21.7	3.78
v	Daily writing exercises improve pupils' letter-formation skills	0	0	11	8.5	44	34.1	50	38.8	24	18.6	3.67
vi	Writing tasks assigned to pupils enhance their ability to construct correct sentences	1	0.8	15	11.6	45	34.9	45	34.9	23	17.8	3.57
vii	Teacher feedback on writing exercises helps pupils understand mistakes and improve future writing	0	0	14	10.9	43	33.3	49	38	23	17.8	3.63
viii	Writing practice increases pupils' vocabulary use in expression	1	0.8	16	12.4	46	35.7	45	34.9	21	16.3	3.54
ix	Classroom Mathematics exercises help pupils master basic arithmetic operations	2	1.6	18	14	47	36.4	42	32.6	20	15.5	3.47
x	Regular arithmetic tasks enable pupils to apply concepts to solve simple problems	1	0.8	13	10.1	45	34.9	47	36.4	23	17.8	3.6
	Grand Mean											**3.64**

Sources: Field Data (2026)

[Keys: 1= Very Small Extent (VSE), 2= Small Extent (SE), 3 = Moderate (M), 4 = High Extent (HE), 5 = Very High Extent (VHE), F = Frequencies, % = Percentage.

Data in Table 2 regarding reading tasks given in class that improve pupils' comprehension of short texts indicate that the majority of the teachers (62.8%) rated the improvement as high and very high. In comparison, a low minority of the teachers (31%) rated the moderate extent, and an extremely minority of the teachers (6.2%) rated as a small extent to which reading tasks given in class improve comprehension of short texts. The mean score was 3.77, indicating that classroom reading tasks improve pupils' comprehension of short texts to a moderate extent.

Furthermore, the study conducted achievement tests from standard two to standard four and confirmed performance across all classes, indicating that most pupils attained moderate to high scores in reading, suggesting good performance in reading time, fluency, and accuracy. Most pupils scored between (08%) and (18%) on the total reading score of (20%), indicating that they could read texts fluently and accurately. However, comprehension scores were generally lower

than those for reading accuracy, suggesting that although most of the pupils could decode words correctly, some still experienced difficulties understanding the meaning of the texts they read. The data also show that some pupils obtained very low or zero scores, indicating persistent reading challenges. This suggests that classroom reading tasks are widely implemented and make a positive contribution to pupils' reading skills. The data are supported by the arguments of the Academic Teacher from School "08", during a face-to-face interview, shared the view that:

> During the supervision of the teaching and learning process, teachers often assign reading exercises by asking students to read words or sentences aloud to the class. These activities help students develop the ability to recognize words quickly and read fluently. Although I noted that the effectiveness of these activities is often constrained by contextual challenges, including large class sizes and inadequate reading materials, which make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support and effectively monitor pupils' comprehension during reading activities, thereby reducing the overall impact of classroom reading tasks on learning outcomes (Academic Teacher 8, Personal Communication, 12th March, 2026).

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School "03" had this to say, *"When I inspect teaching activities, I realize that the teacher providing reading exercises often asks pupils to read words or sentences aloud in front of the class, in small groups, or individually. Even if it's difficult for teachers to provide sufficient guidance, monitor individual progress, and ensure that all pupils meaningfully engage with the reading activities"* (Academic Teacher 3, Personal Communication, 04th March, 2026).

The responses from the academic teachers indicate that in-class reading tasks are recognized as important instructional strategies for improving pupils' comprehension of short texts. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as reading words and sentences aloud, individual and group reading, and guided reading activities that enhance word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension. However, they also acknowledged that challenges such as large class sizes and inadequate reading materials limit teachers' ability to provide individualized support, monitor pupils' progress, and maximize the effectiveness of classroom reading tasks. Also, during document analysis of school "08" on the pupils' exercise books and the teacher's lesson plan (12th March, 2026), it was found that reading exercises were provided to the pupils. However, some of the exercises were not marked for pupils, and some of those marked have not received any correction. The teacher's lesson plan clearly indicated that reading tasks were incorporated into classroom instruction. These findings imply that, while the teacher demonstrated a commitment to incorporating reading activities into classroom instruction, inconsistent marking and a lack of corrective feedback may have reduced the potential impact of these reading tasks on pupils' comprehension of short texts. These findings are consistent with those of Sadick (2025), who found that the effective development of pupils' reading, writing, and arithmetic skills depends not only on the availability of learning activities but also on the quality of the instructional practices employed by teachers. The findings suggest that reading exercises alone may not guarantee improved comprehension unless they are accompanied by systematic assessment, timely feedback, and teacher guidance that helps learners identify and correct mistakes.

Data in Table 2 on daily writing exercises to improve pupils' letter-formation skills indicate that moderate of the teachers (57.4%) rated the high extent and very high extent to which these exercises improve pupils' letter-formation skills. In comparison, a very low majority of the teachers (34.1%) rated it as moderate, and an extremely minority (8.5%) rated it as to a small extent that daily writing exercises improve pupils' letter-formation skills. The mean score was 3.67, indicating that writing exercises to improve pupils' letter-formation skills were implemented to a moderate extent. This means that the majority of teachers acknowledge that repetition and practice in early writing exercises lead to automatic control over letter formation. This was further confirmed by pupils' performance in the achievement test, where a considerable number demonstrated good handwriting and correctly formed letters when responding to writing questions. The achievement test results showed that writing (63%) was the good of the 3Rs skills, indicating relatively moderate early expressive ability among pupils. This suggests that consistent classroom writing practice contributes to the mastery of learners' writing competence, making writing a moderate skill. However, some pupils still experienced difficulties with letter formation, possibly due to large class sizes, which limited teachers' ability to provide scaffolding to each learner.

In this regard, during the face-to-face interview, the Academic Teacher from School "01" shared the following:

> Yes, during internal school quality assurance, I observe that teachers regularly provide writing exercises in pupils' exercise books. These writing activities play an important role in improving pupils' letter-formation skills because they provide repeated opportunities for pupils to practice writing different letters, words, and simple sentences. Through continuous practice, pupils become more accurate in forming letters, improve the readability of their handwriting, and gradually develop stronger writing skills *(*Academic Teacher 1, Personal Communication, 02nd March, 2026).

Regarding the ongoing interview, another Academic Teacher From school "06" gave the following remarks during the interview session:

> During assessment of the teaching and learning process, I observe that teachers regularly provide writing exercises that help pupils learn to form letters correctly and write words and sentences in an organized manner. Teachers often ask pupils to copy sentences from the chalkboard and write answers in their exercise books. Through this consistent practice, pupils gradually improve their letter formation and handwriting skills. However, overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized guidance to every pupil who requires additional support (Academic Teacher 6, Personal Communication, 10th March 2026).

The responses from the academic teachers indicate that regular classroom writing exercises are recognized as important instructional strategies for improving pupils' letter-formation skills. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as repeated writing activities, copying sentences from the chalkboard, and completing written responses in exercise books, which provide pupils with continuous opportunities to develop accurate letter formation, readable handwriting, and organized written work. However, they also acknowledged that challenges such as overcrowded classrooms limit teachers' ability to provide individualized guidance, monitor pupils' writing progress, and effectively support pupils who experience difficulties in developing letter-formation skills. The views imply that teachers perceive letter formation as a foundational

writing skill that is developed through continuous practice. However, its effectiveness depends on adequate teacher support and opportunities for individualized feedback. These findings align with Syarifuddin and Atweh (2022), who highlight that the teaching cycle (Activity, Classroom discussion, Exercise) emphasizes practice through repeated exercises, thereby improving student engagement and learning outcomes. The finding suggests that consistent regular writing practice is an effective instructional strategy for developing early literacy. However, effective implementation may be constrained by contextual challenges such as large class sizes, which limit teachers' ability to provide scaffolding to all pupils.

Data in Table 2 regarding feedback from reading exercises that support pupils in correcting their reading errors indicate that moderate of the teachers (58.4%) rated the feedback as high to very high. In comparison, a low minority of the teachers (32.6%) rated the feedback from reading exercises as moderate in helping pupils correct their reading errors. In contrast, extremely minority rated it as of small extent. The mean score of 3.68 indicates that, to a moderate extent, the majority of teachers are aware of the role of feedback in correcting reading errors. The information gathered during the interview was supported by the questionnaire response as the Academic Teacher from School '08' explained that:

> During classroom supervision, I observe that teachers usually mark pupils' reading exercises and provide feedback by correcting mispronounced words, inaccurate responses, and comprehension mistakes. They guide pupils to reread the correct words or passages so that they can recognize and correct their errors. This feedback helps pupils improve their reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. However, because of large class sizes and limited instructional time, teachers are not always able to provide detailed feedback to every pupil (Academic Teacher 8, Personal Communication, 12th March, 2026*)*.

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School '03' said,

> When monitoring classroom teaching, I observe that teachers provide feedback after pupils complete reading exercises. They usually ask pupils to read again after correcting pronunciation mistakes, explain unfamiliar words, and guide them to identify the correct answers to comprehension questions. This process helps pupils recognize their mistakes and improve their reading skills. However, due to the large number of pupils in each class, teachers are sometimes unable to give every pupil sufficient individual feedback (Academic Teacher 3, Personal Communication, 4th March, 2026).

The perspectives from academic teachers provide clear support for the finding that feedback from reading exercises is an important instructional strategy for helping pupils identify and correct reading errors. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as marking reading exercises, correcting pronunciation errors, addressing inaccurate responses and comprehension mistakes, explaining unfamiliar vocabulary, and guiding pupils to reread corrected words or passages. These practices enable pupils to recognize their weaknesses, improve reading accuracy, strengthen fluency, and enhance comprehension. However, they also acknowledged that challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and limited instructional time reduce teachers' ability to provide timely, individualized feedback and effectively support every pupil's reading development. The views directly reinforce the finding by identifying feedback as a central instructional tool and a strategy for improving reading accuracy and fluency. The findings align clearly with Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam's Assessment for Learning Theory (1998),

particularly the principle that effective feedback must be timely, specific, corrective, and oriented toward improvement rather than grading. The findings suggest the importance of integrating immediate, specific feedback into reading instruction to strengthen pupils' mastery of the 3Rs, while recognizing that differences in feedback practices and classroom conditions may influence its effectiveness.

Data in Table 2 regarding on the regular arithmetic tasks enable pupils to apply concepts to solve simple problems indicate that moderate of the teachers (53.4%) rated that at high extent and very high extent that regular arithmetic tasks enable pupils to apply concepts to solve simple problems, while low minority of the teachers (34.9%) indicate the moderate and extremely minority of the teachers (10.9%) rated that a small extent and very small extent that regular arithmetic tasks enable pupils to apply concepts to solve simple problems. The mean score was 3.60, indicating that teachers recognize, to a moderate extent, that regular arithmetic tasks enable pupils to apply concepts to solve simple problems. This implies that the majority of teachers reflect a strong professional consensus that regular arithmetic tasks are effective in enabling pupils to apply mathematical concepts to solve simple problems.

Moreover, the study administered an achievement test on arithmetic skills, measuring pupils' varying levels of mastery in applying mathematical concepts to solve simple problems. The test assessed pupils' competencies in number recognition, number representation, sequencing, ordering numbers, basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), word problems, fractions, place value, and estimation. The total scores show that while (47%) of the pupils demonstrated satisfactory mastery of arithmetic concepts, a (53%) of the pupils struggled with the given problems. The findings reveal that pupils performed relatively well on basic numerical tasks, particularly number recognition, writing numbers in words, and simple addition and subtraction. Most of the pupils answered questions requiring direct computation correctly, suggesting that regular classroom arithmetic exercises have contributed to the development of foundational calculation skills. However, performance declined on questions that required applying concepts, such as solving word problems, fractions, division, and estimation. The findings imply that regular arithmetic tasks are an important instructional strategy for developing pupils' numeracy skills and problem-solving abilities. However, the variation in achievement test performance suggests that classroom arithmetic exercises should emphasize application-based activities that require pupils to interpret problems and apply mathematical knowledge in different contexts.

In search of further information, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the Academic Teacher from School '10', who had to say, "*During classroom supervision, I observe that teachers regularly give arithmetic exercises requiring pupils to solve simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems. These repeated tasks help pupils apply mathematical concepts and strengthen their problem-solving skills in everyday classroom activities"* (Academic Teacher 10, Personal Communication, 13th March, 2026).

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School "08" had this to say:

> When monitoring classroom teaching, I observe that teachers frequently provide arithmetic exercises after introducing a new mathematical concept. Pupils are required to solve number problems individually and in groups, explain the procedures they used, and compare their answers with others. Through these regular practice activities, pupils

become more confident in applying mathematical concepts to solve simple problems and improve their computational skills (Academic Teacher 8, Personal Communication, 12th March, 2026).

The reflections of academic teachers indicate that regular arithmetic tasks are recognized as important instructional strategies for developing pupils' ability to apply mathematical concepts to solve simple problems. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as repeated practice in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, as well as individual and group problem-solving activities, which enable pupils to strengthen computational skills, understand problem-solving procedures, and apply mathematical knowledge in practical classroom situations. However, they also highlighted that effective implementation of arithmetic exercises requires continuous guidance, opportunities for pupil participation, and adequate teacher support to ensure that all pupils develop confidence and mastery in applying mathematical concepts. These views imply that teachers perceive regular arithmetic practice as essential for transforming mathematical concepts into practical problem-solving abilities through continuous practice, guided learning, and reinforcement of numeracy skills.

During document analysis of pupils' exercise books and teachers' lesson plans in School, it was found that arithmetic exercises were regularly incorporated into classroom instruction. Pupils' exercise books showed evidence of repeated practice of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems, while teachers' lesson plans indicated that arithmetic tasks were included in classroom activities after introducing mathematical concepts. The reviewed documents also revealed that pupils were given opportunities to solve numerical problems and demonstrate procedures for arriving at answers. These findings imply that regular arithmetic exercises provided pupils with continuous practice in applying mathematical concepts and strengthening their problem-solving skills. This aligns with Stanslaus and Msoroka (2022), who reported that pupils' mastery of the 3Rs is influenced by the quality of the teaching and learning environment, and that effective instructional practices are necessary for developing numeracy skills.

The Data in Table 2 on regular reading exercises indicate that a majority of the teachers (63.6%) rated them as enhancing pupils' ability to read fluently to a high or very high extent. In comparison, a very low majority of the teachers (29.5%) rated this as moderate, indicating that regular reading exercises enhance pupils' ability to read fluently, and an extremely minority (7%) rated it as to a small extent. The mean score was 3.78, indicating that teachers acknowledge the importance of regular reading exercises for improving pupils' mastery of reading skills to a moderate extent. A majority of teachers agree that regular reading exercises are a core instructional practice rather than a supplementary strategy.

Moreover, the study administered an achievement test on reading fluency, measuring pupils' varying levels of mastery in accurately reading a short Kiswahili passage within the required time. The test assessed pupils' ability to recognize words, maintain reading flow, pronounce words correctly, and read the passage at an appropriate speed and with confidence. The data show that (58%) of the pupils demonstrated satisfactory mastery of reading fluency, and (42%) of pupils struggled to read the passage fluently. The findings reveal that some pupils performed well in reading tasks, demonstrating the ability to recognize words, read sentences continuously, and complete the passage within the allocated three minutes. However, performance declined

among pupils who obtained low or zero fluency scores, indicating challenges in word recognition, pronunciation, reading pace, and maintaining smooth reading flow. The findings imply that regular reading exercises are an important instructional strategy for developing pupils' reading fluency skills. However, the variation in achievement test performance suggests that classroom reading activities should place greater emphasis on continuous guided reading practice, individual support, and repeated exposure to texts to enable all pupils to develop effective reading fluency.

The data are supported by the arguments of the Academic Teacher from School "01" during a face-to-face interview, who shared the view that, "*during classroom supervision, I observe that teachers regularly provide reading exercises that require pupils to read words, sentences, and short passages. These activities help pupils improve pronunciation, reading speed, and fluency through continuous practice*" (Academic Teacher 1, Personal Communication, 02nd March, 2026).

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School "09" had this to say:

> When monitoring teaching and learning activities, I observe that teachers frequently engage pupils in reading exercises through individual, group, and reading-aloud activities. These practices provide pupils with repeated exposure to written texts, enabling them to improve word recognition, pronunciation, confidence, and reading fluency. Continuous reading practice helps pupils develop the skills required for effective reading (Academic Teacher 9, Personal Communication, 12th March, 2026).

The views of academic teachers provide clear support for a practice-based approach to developing pupils' reading fluency, in which regular engagement with reading activities and continuous practice contribute to improved reading skills. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as reading words, sentences, and short passages, as well as individual, group, and reading-aloud activities, which provide pupils with repeated opportunities to improve pronunciation, word recognition, reading speed, and confidence. However, they also indicated that effective development of reading fluency requires consistent, purposeful classroom reading activities, adequate teacher guidance, and sufficient opportunities for pupils to actively engage with diverse texts to strengthen their overall reading mastery. During document analysis of pupils' exercise books and teachers' lesson plans in School, it was found that reading activities were regularly incorporated into classroom instruction. Pupils' exercise books contained evidence of reading exercises involving words, sentences, and short passages. At the same time, teachers' lesson plans showed that reading activities, such as oral, individual, and guided reading, were included in literacy lessons. The documents further revealed that pupils were given repeated opportunities to practice reading and to respond to short texts. These findings imply that regular reading exercises were systematically implemented in classroom practice, providing pupils with continuous exposure to written texts that support improvement in pronunciation, word recognition, reading speed, and fluency. The findings are consistent with the study by Sadick (2025), who found that school quality assurance strategies, particularly effective school leadership, teacher professional development, and community involvement, play an important role in enhancing Grade Three learners' competencies in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The finding strengthens the argument that effective monitoring, continuous teacher support, and

appropriate instructional practices are essential for improving pupils' acquisition of foundational 3Rs competencies.

Data in table 2 regarding on the teacher feedback on writing exercises helps pupils understand mistakes in improve future writing indicate that majority of the teachers (66.7%) rated high extent and very high extent teacher feedback on writing exercises helps understand mistakes in improving future writing, while low minority of teachers the (33.3%) rated to a moderate that teacher feedback on writing exercises helps understand mistakes in improving future writing. The mean score was 3.68, indicating that, to a moderate extent, feedback on writing exercises is effective in helping pupils identify errors and improve future writing. The majority of teachers already recognize feedback as pedagogically valuable for improving pupils' future writing. The data align with the views presented by the Academic Teacher from School "04" during the face-to-face interview, who explained that:

> From my observations of teaching and learning activities, teachers regularly provide written and oral feedback after pupils complete writing exercises. They correct errors related to spelling, handwriting, punctuation, grammar, and sentence construction, then encourage pupils to revise or rewrite their work. This approach enables pupils to understand their mistakes, improve subsequent writing tasks, and gradually develop more accurate and organized writing skills (Academic Teacher 4, Personal Communication, 06th March, 2026).

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School "02" had this to say:

> When I supervise teaching and learning activities, I observe that teachers provide feedback during and after classroom reading exercises by correcting pupils' pronunciation, word recognition, and comprehension errors. They encourage pupils to reread corrected words and passages, enabling them to recognize their mistakes, improve reading accuracy, and gradually develop greater fluency and comprehension through continuous corrective guidance (Academic Teacher 2, Personal Communication, 03rd March, 2026).

Academic teachers' views indicate that teacher feedback following classroom exercises is recognized as an important instructional strategy for supporting pupils' identification and correction of learning errors. Academic teachers emphasized practices such as providing corrective feedback during and after reading activities, guiding pupils to revisit incorrect responses, correcting pronunciation and word recognition errors, and explaining areas requiring improvement. They also highlighted written and oral feedback on writing exercises, including corrections related to spelling, handwriting, punctuation, grammar, and sentence construction, which enable pupils to revise their work and improve subsequent writing performance. However, they implied that the effectiveness of feedback depends on its regularity, specificity, and timely provision, ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes and develop mastery of the 3Rs skills. The finding demonstrates that classroom exercises alone are insufficient unless they are purposefully structured as a systematic integration and followed by targeted feedback that addresses identified learning gaps. The findings align with Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam's Assessment for Learning Theory (1998), which emphasizes the systematic integration of classroom exercises with feedback, directly reflecting the assessment-for-learning principle that assessment is a continuous, interactive process that guides both teaching and learning.

Data in table 2 regarding on the writing practice increases pupils' vocabulary use in expression the moderate of the teachers (52.7%) rated that at high extent and very high extent writing practice increases pupils' vocabulary use in expression, while the low minority of the teachers (34.9%) rated that moderate and extremely minority of the teachers (12.4%) rated at small extent that writing practice increases pupils' vocabulary use in expression. The mean score was 3.57, indicating that writing practice increases pupils' vocabulary use in their writing to a moderate extent. The majority of teachers strongly agreed that writing practice should be intentionally positioned as a means of expressing vocabulary.

Furthermore, the study administered a dictation achievement test, measuring pupils' varying levels of mastery in accurately writing dictated words. The test assessed pupils' ability to write words correctly, use appropriate uppercase and lowercase letters, write letters accurately, and produce the correct form of each dictated word. The data show that (63%) of the pupils demonstrated satisfactory mastery of dictation writing, while (37%)of the pupils number experienced difficulties in accurately writing the dictated words. The results reveal that some pupils performed well in the dictation tasks, demonstrating the ability to use appropriate capitalization and to write the dictated words without errors. However, performance declined among pupils who obtained low or zero scores, indicating challenges in spelling accuracy, correct letter formation, capitalization, and recall of the correct written form of words. Pupils who obtained low scores often recognized the intended words but made spelling and capitalization errors, whereas those who obtained zero scores were unable to write the dictated words correctly. This means that writing exercises alone may not be sufficient to improve pupils' writing skills unless they are deliberately designed to provide explicit instruction in spelling, capitalization, letter formation, and continuous corrective feedback that enables pupils to learn from their mistakes and progressively improve their writing accuracy. During the interview, face-to-face with the Academic Teacher from School "06" explained that,

> From my observations of classroom teaching, I have noticed that although teachers regularly give writing exercises, many pupils continue to use a limited range of vocabulary in their written work. Most writing tasks emphasize copying sentences or completing short exercises rather than encouraging pupils to use new words in meaningful expressions. As a result, writing practice does not always lead to substantial improvement in pupils' vocabulary development (Academic Teacher 6, Personal Communication, 10th March, 2026).

At the same time, the Academic Teacher from School "03" had this to say:

> In reviewing pupils' written work, I have observed that writing exercises are conducted regularly, but many pupils repeatedly use familiar words and short sentences. Teachers often concentrate on completing the syllabus rather than guiding pupils to apply new vocabulary in their writing. Consequently, vocabulary growth through writing practice remains limited for some pupils (Academic Teacher 3, Personal Communication, 04th March, 2026).

Academic teachers' responses indicate that classroom writing exercises are recognized as important instructional strategies for improving pupils' vocabulary use in written expression. Academic teachers emphasized that writing activities such as copying sentences and completing short written exercises provide pupils with regular opportunities to practice writing. However,

they also acknowledged that these activities often provide limited opportunities for pupils to apply newly learned vocabulary in meaningful contexts. In addition, they noted that teachers' emphasis on syllabus coverage rather than explicit vocabulary instruction leads many pupils to rely on familiar words and simple sentence structures, thereby limiting the potential of writing exercises to expand pupils' vocabulary. The views imply that routine writing practice alone is insufficient to improve pupils' vocabulary use in expression unless it is deliberately designed to encourage the application of new words, varied sentence construction, and meaningful written communication.

During document analysis of pupils' exercise books and teachers' lesson plans in School "06" (10th March, 2026), it was found that writing exercises were regularly incorporated into classroom instruction. Pupils were frequently assigned activities such as copying words and sentences, completing short written responses, and rewriting sentences from the chalkboard. Teachers' lesson plans also indicated that writing activities were consistently included in daily lessons. However, the reviewed exercise books showed limited evidence of activities requiring pupils to construct original sentences, use newly learned vocabulary, or express ideas in extended writing. Most teacher feedback focused on correcting handwriting, spelling, and punctuation rather than encouraging vocabulary expansion or varied language use. These findings imply that while writing exercises were implemented consistently, they primarily promoted writing accuracy and dictation skills, with limited emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary use and written expression. The findings contrast with those of Teng (2023), who found that writing activities that explicitly required learners to use newly acquired vocabulary in sentence-writing tasks significantly enhanced vocabulary acquisition compared to reading alone or gap-filling exercises. The findings suggest that although writing exercises were regularly provided, they mainly involved copying words and sentences, with limited opportunities for pupils to use new vocabulary in authentic written expression, thereby restricting vocabulary growth.

Generally, the quantitative findings revealed that classroom exercises enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs skills to a moderate extent (3.64 mean), with teachers reporting positive role of reading tasks, writing exercises, arithmetic activities, and feedback practices in enhancing pupils' competencies. This quantitative result is supported by qualitative findings that revealed contextual and instructional limitations, which explain why the quantitative ratings remained at a moderate extent rather than a high extent. Academic teachers indicated that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials, limited instructional time, and insufficient opportunities for individualized guidance reduce teachers' ability to monitor pupils' progress and provide timely feedback. Overall, the integrated findings indicate that classroom exercises enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs skills to a moderate extent in public primary schools in Mkalama District.

10. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that, to a moderate extent classroom exercises enhance pupils' mastery of the 3Rs skills through regular reading practice, writing activities, corrective feedback, and repeated arithmetic problem-solving tasks. However, the extent of these exercises was moderated by challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited individualized support, inadequate corrective and timely feedback, and overemphasis on routine copying and drill-based activities rather than meaningful application of skills.

11. Recommendation

The study recommended that Teachers should provide regular, differentiated, and learner-centred 3Rs exercises with timely feedback during classroom instruction. Academic teachers and headteachers should monitor and support the implementation of these exercises each term. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, together with school quality assurance officers, should provide adequate teaching and learning resources, address classroom overcrowding, and strengthen school-based teacher professional development to improve pupils' mastery of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.

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