

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PUBLISHING
PART IV SECOND SEMESTER MAY 2013 EXAMINATIONS
IPU 4204 STATE PUBLISHING, TRANS-NATIONALS AND INDIGENOUS PUBLISHERS
TIME: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. ANSWER QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER THREE (3) QUESTIONS
2. QUESTION 1 CARRIES 40 MARKS AND EACH OF THE OTHER QUESTIONS CARRIES 20 MARKS
3. IMPORTANCE IS ATTACHED TO ACCURACY, CLARITY OF EXPRESSION AND LEGIBLE HANDWRITING

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1. Read the attached Passage, *'The Writer, the Publisher and their Languages'* and then answer the following questions.
 - a) Describe and assess the role of a language policy in publishing. In your considerations address (i) the influence of state publishing, and (ii) the role that trans-nationals play. **(20 marks)**
 - b) Give five reasons why the author of this article thinks that *'the trend toward the privatization of textbook production will strengthen indigenous publishing'*. **(10 marks)**
 - c) *'Yet the problems facing local or indigenous publishers in Africa are legion'*. Discuss five major problems that African publishers face. **(10 marks)**
 2. 'Are indigenous businesses and their priorities entirely blameless for the current state of indigenous publishing'? Discuss and give five reasons why you would blame the local publishers, booksellers and authors. **(20 marks)**
 3. Develop an argument for the following as it relates to the recommendations and calls for follow-up action made at the 1984 African Publishers' Seminar: *'African governments were called upon to create conditions in which indigenous publishing could thrive. To that end, they were urged to dismantle state publishing monopolies which were not only incapable of efficient management of book publishing but which made it impossible for private publishing companies to take root, since they were unable, in the presence of these and of transnational companies, to compete effectively in the textbook market'*. **Source: Development Dialogue, 1997** **(20 marks)**
 4. Discuss the African Books Collective Initiative, the benefits it brought to African publishing including the challenges it faced and those challenges currently faced by many African Publishers today. **(20 marks)**

5. The World Bank's involvement in book issues in Africa was/is centred around 'provision' rather than 'production'. Discuss how the Bank has influenced the publishing scenario in Africa and how the African publisher has responded to the Bank strategy/ies. Use examples from Africa. **(20 marks)**

6. 'State publishing houses have continued to exist in Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana.' Critique the role played by state publishing in these three African states. **(20 marks)**

END OF PAPER

The Writer, the Publisher and their Languages

Knowledge of the nature of African publishing helps us better to understand the context of African literatures. Language policies and realities in African countries are complex, often controversial, and influence patterns of publishing and writing. This situation is tied to the diverse languages spoken in territories carved under colonialism, but also to national and international power relations as well as economic and educational policies pursued since independence. This useful book explores the trends, problems and opportunities of publishing in the many and varied languages of Africa from the varying perspective of publisher, writer, and state, and raises important themes for H-AfrLitCine members to ponder.

Language is a crucial vector and symbol of identity and social participation. Educationalists generally agree that learning and associated publication in first languages effectively promotes and maintains literacy. Yet the problems facing local or indigenous publishers in Africa are legion. In this book, eight well-qualified scholars and publishers share their knowledge and experience of the literary, historical, educational, social, economic, and political dimensions of publishing in the face of these problems. They present case studies from Tanzania and Kenya (Swahili), Ethiopia, Southern Africa, Francophone West Africa, and Nigeria. Introductory and concluding chapters discuss broader issues of language and publishing. A chapter on India's successes in local language publishing adds a comparative vista.

The practice of African language publishing influences the nature of African literatures [1], education, and politics. Literary awards such as the Nobel, Commonwealth Literature, and even the Africa-centric Noma prizes rarely go to writers in African languages that are, after all, spoken by the majority of Africans. The fragility of African publishing is an indicator of the state of African economies. In 1981, 'the vast continent of Africa, with ten percent of the world population, produced a meagre two percent of the global output of books'.[2] A decade later, Africa's share was one percent, with seventy percent of its book needs imported.[3] On the other hand, whereas world linguistic surveys point to growing language rationalization (consolidation into major languages) and a decline in the number of living languages, African languages continue to reproduce and generate ever-new dialects and lingua francas.[4]

Philip Altbach, a specialist on African publishing, opens the book with an outline of dilemmas faced by publishers in African languages, illustrated with ample comparative examples. He makes a strong case for the continuing viability for these publishers and recounts their major problems: dominance by colonial or 'world' languages (notably English and French) that are still favoured by ruling elites; linguistic complexity; the high cost of special typography for tonal differences in non-standardized scripts; the political difficulties of privileging one language over another; cross-border linguistic tensions; the limited purchasing power and low literacy rates of readers; shortage of basic materials; and limited markets.[5]

In the face of these severe problems and given the failures of experiments in state publishing, Altbach sets the trend for other contributors when he argues (though with scant regard for the omnipotence of the transnational corporation (TNC)) that "the trend toward the privatization of textbook production will strengthen indigenous publishing" (p. 3). The other authors, apparently celebrating the demise of the state publishing house and eagerly awaiting the Millennium of the Market, take up this refrain.

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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PUBLISHING
PART IV SECOND SEMESTER AUGUST 2013 SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS
IPU 4204 STATE PUBLISHING, TRANS-NATIONALS AND INDIGENOUS PUBLISHERS
TIME: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

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1. Read the attached Case Study, *'The Panaceas'* and then answer the following questions.
 - a) In what ways has the continued domination by expatriate publishers made the task of publishing in African languages more difficult? Cite and discuss at least five ways. **(20 marks)**
 - b) *'Are indigenous businesses and their priorities entirely blameless for the current state of indigenous publishing'*? Discuss and give five reasons why you would blame the local publishers, booksellers and authors. **(15 marks)**
 - c) Suggest ways in which the African state can intervene to protect the African book market from the trans-national companies (TNCs). Support your answer fully. **(5 marks)**
 2. *"The scenario for the future of publishing in Africa is easily discernible, African Publishing playing an insignificant role, the source of books and reading materials remaining external and indigenous publishers playing a mediating role between the 'European' publisher/producer and the African book market"*. Comment on this statement giving examples of how the publishing industry has developed in the past two decades. **(20 marks)**
 3. Discuss the obstacles that African publishers encountered in the 1970s when faced with the influx of trans-national publishers from the West. Use examples from the East and Central Africa. **(20 marks)**
 4. Alice Saunders once said that 'a balance between private and public sectors is likely to be more beneficial for African societies'. Do you agree? Support your answer fully citing examples from the African publishing industry. **(20 marks)**
 5. Suggest ways in which the establishment of equitable and mutually beneficial joint ventures in publishing in Africa could be the best way to achieve a sound publishing industry. Use examples from the African industry. **(20 marks)**
 6. Discuss the African Books Collective Initiative, the benefits it brought to African publishing including the challenges it faced and those challenges currently faced by many African Publishers today. **(20 marks)**

CASE STUDY: Supplementary Exam August 2013

PANACEAS?

Is neo-liberalism therefore the main solution to problems besetting publishing in African languages? A number of factors suggest not. In some countries, such as Guinea, where textbook publishing has been opened to the private sector, many different obstacles continue to impede book development.[10] Moreover, literacy levels so crucial in the chain of writing-publishing-reading have been undermined by Structural Adjustment Programs that require governments to spend less on education.

The weakest link in African publishing is distribution [11] and the state certainly has failed to effectively develop this sector. However, this is only part of the picture. Low incomes, poorly developed infrastructures of local book shops, libraries, and transport links, and continued domination by expatriate publishers have exacerbated foreign dependency and made the task of publishing in African languages still more difficult. Capital requires profit and a market numerically dominated by an impoverished and relatively minuscule reading public offers little attraction to business (whether speaking indigenous or Western languages). Partial Africanization of foreign subsidiaries (for instance of OUP in Nigeria in 1972) provided a stimulus to indigenous publishers but many African governments continue to contract textbooks out to transnational corporations.

The contributors to the book are alert to this domination and endeavour to chart realistic strategies for African countries. However, they present little evidence on such determining factors as ownership or investment patterns. Mulokozi notes that few books were, at the time of his writing, (June 1998) being published due to ongoing privatization of firms such as Tanzanian Publishing House and whilst this may be a temporary aberration he does not consider the wider effects of such a hiatus. Neither do they treat in any detail the options for joint state-private ventures or the possibilities for reform of state publishing houses to make them more viable and better managed. [12]

Are indigenous businesses and their priorities entirely blameless for the current state of indigenous publishing? Do all publishers in fact speak the same 'language' as their authors or are they increasingly speaking another language, that of profit? Clearly, the authors agree, previous systems have failed. They put their faith in privatization. However, they do not consider the effects of possible future failure in this emergent sector in the face of tough competition with transnational corporations that are likely to continue to lack interest in indigenous publishing. Schemes such as affordable book imports linked to aid programs can meet immediate requirements. But they also run the risk of increasing dependency and reliance on 'world' languages and in the end do little to meet the economic and cultural requirements of African societies.

In my opinion, continued domination of the book market by TNCs can only effectively be met by state intervention, massive growth of local capital, or a mixture of both. I agree with Alice Saunders that a balance between private and public sectors is likely to be more beneficial for African societies.[13]

On the other hand, given that 'world' languages continue to have strong appeal to national elites [14] perhaps indigenous language publishing is doomed? Surveys show that many parents still prefer their children to be instructed in English as they see this as a language that gives access to privileges. Phaswane Mpe reminds us that the anticipated expansion of indigenous book markets in South Africa has not occurred.[15] Whilst in the face of Africa's escalating economic and social problems it is difficult to be overly optimistic about the future of publishing in African languages, this is an area where writers and others engaged in the processes of teaching, learning and communication might make a tangible contribution.