

## **Writing and Publishing Children's Literature in Other Local Languages in Tanzania: Prospects and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the prospects and challenges of writing and publishing in other local languages spoken in Tanzania. It is argued in this article that writing and publishing in other local languages is an area that should be explored in order to tap into the rich tangible and intangible heritage documented in these languages. It is also argued that the current language policy provisions in Tanzania do not provide the desired impetus and enabling policy environment for writing and publishing in other local languages. The prominence and hegemony given to Kiswahili stifles the efforts of writing and publishing in other local languages spoken in Tanzania. As such, there is need to review the language policy to preserve, promote, accommodate and reflect Tanzania's linguistic diversity through writing and publishing in other local languages.<sup>1</sup> Theoretically, the article is underpinned by the Afrocentricity conceptualisation, which is a mode of thought, and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives pre-dominate.

**Key Words:** Writing and publishing, Children's literature, local languages, language policy, hegemony of Kiswahili language

### **Introduction**

For our present purpose, we would define children's literature as all literary works written/ prepared by adults or children intended to be consumed or performed by children audience (Wamitila, 2008; Ngugi, 2012; Matundura,

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Kobia & Mukuthuria, 2013). Though children's literature, is not very different from adult literature in the artistic use of language, Wamitila (2008), Matundura, Kobia and Mukuthuria (2013), Bakize (2014), Ngugi (2014), Lyimo (2014a; 2014b & 2016), and Bakize (2017), argue that it has some distinctive features that make it different from adult literature. Some of these features include the abundance use of fantasy, using children as its core characters, using simple artistic language, good things to be the expected ends, form and content of these literary works are designed considering age and children's cognitive abilities level. Also, in this article, we shall use the term African children's literature to refer to "that piece of literary creation which draws its subject matter from the African world view and which is written in a language and style the African child can comprehend" (Osazee, 1991:74). This literature must be seen as promoting African culture and enabling the child or young adult to understand and appreciate his or her environment better and it must give him or her some pleasure.

African written children's literature started to flourish in the 1980s. Before this time, children's characters in literary works were being treated in a similar way as other adult characters, and hence not much attention was given to children's written literary works (Osa, 1985). During the colonial period, what was referred to as African children's literature was written in foreign languages and depicted white supremacy instead of benefiting the African child (Osa, 1985). Writing and publishing of children's literature in African languages was engineered by the consciousness of many post-independence African's writers who realised that the education system and the books read by children in Africa were still those inherited from the

colonial period. Patriotic African writers also recognised the challenge of producing children's literature that would deconstruct cultural misconceptions and "preserve the landscape of their imagination" (Quote of Chinua Achebe in Osa 1995: xi). In Tanzania, writing and publishing of children's literature started in the 1970s and 1980s, and gained momentum in the 1990s after the inauguration of Children's Books Project (CBP) (Madumulla, 2001; Mulokozi, 2012). Kiswahili children's literature today reflects Swahili peoples' culture and children literary texts are, specifically, written to be consumed by the Swahili children community. To the knowledge of the author, written children's literature in Tanzania does not exist in other local languages spoken in Tanzania, yet the country is multilingual, comprising of more than 150 languages (Werrema, 2012). Children's literature is largely available in Kiswahili because it is the official and national language and also a Language of Instruction in public primary schools. Thus, literature in Kiswahili has more official support and has a wider readership than literature in English and other languages.

After the attainment of independence in many African countries, many African authors realised the faults that existed in the colonial education systems and the educational material contents. One of such faults was that African children were forced to think like European children (Osa, 1985). The literary works, which the African children were reading, were not depicting the African landscape and, hence, the literary works were making children think and act like foreigners in their own African land (Madumulla, 2001). Again, other writers used western languages, but adapted to African environments, characters, verbal culture (for instance proverbs). Therefore, mind liberation was an ongoing process. African authors started to write in

African languages in order to benefit the African child from literary works. These literary works would help the African child to understand such things like his/her background, the African beauty, challenges and survival strategies from the gained African experiences.

Writing and publishing in African languages was a good strategy of dismantling the remaining colonial legacies that made African children become slaves and captives in their own land. It should be noted that the writing and publishing of African children's literature concentrated on the languages that had wider readership and the languages that were accepted and favoured by the governments. That means writing and publishing of children's literature was done in national or official languages only. This situation, in one way or another, brought confusion as some African countries declared some foreign languages their official and national languages. However, this argument is not of concern in this article. Therefore, we shall spare it and embark on writing and publishing in African local languages. Generally, African countries embarking on writing and publishing literary works in their official and national languages neglected publishing in local African languages. This article discusses this situation by focusing on the prospects and challenges of writing and publishing in African local languages particularly in Tanzania.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

This article is guided by the Afrocentricity conceptualisation. Asante (2003:2) defines Afrocentricity Theory as "a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. It is the placing of African people in the centre of analysis of African phenomena." Afrocentricity is a theory that emphasises that

“Africans should be understood by taking them as subjects and not objects” (Okofor, 2010:12). Everything regarding Africans must be understood based on African perspective and by putting Africans at the centre. It is a theory that puts an “emphasis on shared African origins among all ‘black’ people, taking pride in those origins and an interest in African history and culture ...” (Howe, 1999:1). Moreover, another significant claim of the theory is that African art has a great role to play in conceptualising African societies (p’Bitek, 1986).

Asante (1998:2) also asserts that “any analysis that involves African culture and behaviour whether literary or economic, whether political or cultural, should consider the quality location of the perspective within the context of African history and culture.” This theory, therefore, asserts that “African ideals and values must be centrally situated in any analysis involving African culture and behaviour” (Okofor, 2010:11). The theory helps in assessing how other Tanzanian local languages as part of African heritage are given the desired weight in the writing and publishing of African children’s literature in Tanzania.

### **Background to children’s literature in Tanzania**

Before embarking on Kiswahili children’s literature, we find it convincing to discuss a little bit about the African literature in general and Tanzanian children’s literature in particular. It should be noted that, for a long time before the colonial period, the majority of African communities had oral literature as their expressive medium in their daily lives. Like in other African countries, oral literature in Tanzania has existed from the time immemorial. This is because, African oral literature was not only for pleasure, like the way literature was in Europe and other parts of the world,

but a communicative vehicle of African daily living. Oral literature expressed Africans' philosophy was used to initiate children when becoming adults, was used in traditional ceremonies like initiations, weddings, kings installations, burial ceremonies, and rituals. With this backdrop, it is so convincing to believe that children's literature existed even before the coming of the colonialists. African children's literature existed in the form of songs, riddles, stories, sayings, and the like.

However, it should be borne in mind that, before 1980s in Africa, it was not easy to differentiate written children's literature from adult literature. This was because adults in different settings and vice versa could, sometimes, use some literary oral and written works that could be considered special for children. Therefore, it is right to argue that children's literature was so complex in the sense that it was found in the general African oral and written literature. After the coming of the colonialists in Africa, since mental colonialism was also still the fact of dominating Africans, the colonialists imposed their formal educational systems and imposed their educational content that could favour white superiority. The educational system was designed in favour of their existence and continual exploitation of Africans mentally, physically and economically. Therefore, in primary and secondary education, the colonialists brought European books to impart European thinking to African children and, hence, to capture the Africans attention. The colonial domination discouraged African oral literature as it was seen as a tool that could continue raising awareness and praising Africans.

As noted earlier, after the attainment of independence, African writers started reversing the situation by writing in African languages and by taking Africa's beautifulness as their core base. From that time, children started reading literature that was African based. The African child started reading books that depicted an African child as a hero/heroine in his/her own environment. Children started celebrating African persons who should be praised and learned as African heroes and heroines. In line with this situation, in Tanzania, children's literature after the colonial period started as adult books simplified for children in 1960s, and gained momentum in the 1990s after the inauguration of Children's Books Project (CBP) in 1991 (Madumulla, 2001). From the 1990s, children's literature emerged as an area of interest for writers in order to impart the reading habit and skills among the Tanzania children (Madumulla, 2001, CODE, 2015).

Since the inauguration of CBP in 1991, many books have been written, published and disseminated in some Tanzania primary schools that are under the CBP. Children's literature as a field of study in Tanzania has no long history (Mulokozi, 2012; Bakize, 2013; Lyimo, 2014a & 2014b). As a taught field, children's literature started with the department of Literature, Communication and Publishing at the University of Dar es Salaam. Kiswahili children's literature started in 2012 as a core course to BA with Education students who were taking Kiswahili as their teaching subject. Later, in 2013, it was also made a core course to BA Kiswahili students. The field has continued growing as it has been having more than 400 students per intake yearly. Apart from BA with Education students, some master's programme students have shown interest of embarking on it in their research part. In 2016, two master's degree students graduated by

researching on the field. Moreover, in 2014, one student graduated in the field at a PhD level. Additionally, some good news is heard from other universities where Kiswahili children's literature is being taught now. These other universities include State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and University of Dodoma (UDOM). Some other researches are still in progress on the field and a lot is being written to explore children's literature particularly in Kiswahili language. This article shall not confine itself to the development of children's literature but to the writing and publishing of the field in Tanzanian local languages as a way of expressing Tanzanian languages diversity and preservation of Tanzanian culture. Before going further, it would be better to survey on the language policy of Tanzania to see how it favours or sidelines the local languages.

### **The languages policy and prospects and challenges of writing and publishing in Tanzanian local languages**

Tanzania language policy is embedded in the Tanzanian Cultural Policy (1997) that is under the Ministry responsible for culture (Mulokozi, 2003; Msanjila, 2009; Mohammed, 2014). One thing worth-mentioning here is that Tanzania has no separate policy document on language policy. Language policy as depicted in Tanzania Cultural Policy (1997) was based on demographic, historical, political, economic, and linguistic factors (cf. Wizara ya Utamaduni, 1997). Kiswahili has been used in primary education since German colonial rule in the nineteenth century, when it was already widely used throughout the colony. The British continued to use Kiswahili in the first four grades, and English became the medium thereafter. Politically, Kiswahili is not the language of a dominant ethnic group. So, it proved a viable agent of integration during nationalist struggles for independence allowing political activists like Julius Nyerere and Bibi Titi



Mohamed to visit all parts of the country without interpreters, thereby identifying themselves with the common people.

Surveying the Tanzanian Cultural Policy document on language use, the following important declarations will be useful in guiding our article. In that cultural policy document, it has been stated that in Tanzania there are three kinds of languages. These are local languages; national language, which is Kiswahili, and; foreign languages such as Portuguese, Arabic, German, English and French (Wizara ya Utamaduni, 1997:15). Specifically, regarding the national and official language, the policy declares that Kiswahili shall be the national language and this declaration should be incorporated in the national constitution (cf. article No. 3.1.1). On local languages, the Policy maintains that Tanzanian societies shall continue using and feeling proud of their local languages (cf. article No. 3.2.1). Tanzanian local languages are the treasure of the national history, traditions and customs, technology and culture in general” (Wizara ya Utamaduni, 1997:17). The explanations on local languages go further by stating that the citizens, civil and private organizations will be motivated to write, collect, research, preserve and translate local languages into other languages (cf. article No. 3.2.2). Writing of dictionaries and grammatical books on local languages will be encouraged (cf. article No. 3.2.3). Finally, civil and private organizations will be encouraged to publish and disseminate local languages publications (cf. article No. 3.2.4). On foreign languages, Tanzania shall continue communication with other foreign countries, in different aspects, by using foreign languages. Therefore, there is a need of encouraging the teaching of foreign languages such as English and French in Tanzania’s schools (cf. article No. 3.3).

Declaration of the language policy as depicted in Tanzania Cultural Policy (1997) that Tanzanian local languages are treasure of the national history, traditions and customs, technology and culture in general, require Tanzanian local languages to be valued and measures to be taken to promote their usage. Thus, it was expected that the government would offer support in researching, publishing and disseminating written local languages materials, including children's literature written in local languages. Governmental and political wills would assure the existence and establishment of Tanzanian local languages. The government and the languages policy are expected to enable the use of local languages in education, encourage their usage in some contexts such as hospitals, churches, courts, and other formal communicative areas (Msanjila, 2003). With this emphasis on the use and value of local languages writing and publishing of literary works for children and adults would be possible since there would be the assurance of having enough audience to consume the publications. The question would be, are these expectations met?

Generally, from the Tanzanian Cultural Policy (1997), it was expected that citizens, civil and private organizations would be motivated to write, collect, research, preserve and translate local languages into other languages (cf. article No. 3.2.2); writing of dictionaries and grammatical books of local languages would be encouraged (cf. article No. 3.2.3), and; civil and private organizations would be encouraged to publish and disseminate local languages publications (cf. article No. 3.2.4). However, in the real situation, in Tanzania today, there are only few books published in local languages, most of which were published in the colonial era or published by Europeans

who worked in those language areas. During the colonial period, Africans in Tanganyika (by then) were allowed to use the local languages in their daily activities. Due to this, the Germans and British, especially the missionaries, for purpose of evangelization, were so much interested in understanding local languages. It is with this perspective that we find some local dictionaries, books of stories and Bible translations done in African local languages. Writing and publishing of children's literature is facing many challenges in Tanzania due to various reasons. The following section shall embark on the challenges that hinder the writing and publishing children's literature in local languages in Tanzania.

***The prominence and hegemony of Kiswahili in Tanzania***

The first and foremost challenge facing publishing and disseminating children's literature in local languages is prominence and hegemony of Kiswahili language in Tanzanian. As Mulokozi has noted it, the list of studies on the rise and development of Kiswahili as a national language in Tanzania is exhaustive. Some of these studies include Whiteley (1969), Chiraghdin and Mnyampala (1977), Khamis (1990), Heine (1990), Legère (1990) Mbaabu (1991), among others (cf. Mulokozi, 2003, and; 2009). Although this article shall not repeat what the former scholars have argued, it is arguably accepted that "the rise and spread of Kiswahili from community language to a lingua franca, and finally to national language, was largely demand driven in the socio-economic sense" (Mulokozi, 2003:66). Notably, Kiswahili has been the language of Zanzibar and Tanganyikan/Tanzanian coast for centuries. It was spread in upcountry in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The rise and development of Kiswahili language has been assisted by many factors, as summarized by Mulokozi (2003: 66):

In the pre-1900, Kiswahili developed because of maritime trade; the caravan trade into the interior and the accompanying commercial empire building, especially in the Congo; the rise of Zanzibar as East Africa's commercial capital; the Bantu cultural complex, with its close affinity to the Swahili complex, and its cultural and political tolerance; the relative cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the Swahili communities; and the factor of Islam.

Moreover, from 1900 - 1960 Kiswahili language developed further due to most of the above factors, plus the following points mentioned by Mulokozi (2003:66 - 67; 2009:73):

German colonial language policy, made Kiswahili the language of the lower level administration, education and the military; Christian missionary activities, including alphabetisation, book printing and publishing; the mass media, especially introduction of Kiswahili newsarticles, magazines and periodicals, and, after 1950, the radio and television; cultural activities, especially pop culture, such as music, games and sports, ceremonies, rituals, dances, dramas and movies; economic and social changes, including urbanization, migrant wage labour (notably plantation economy), and the accompanying trade unionism, new infrastructures, especially the railways and roads; the nationalist politics (the Maji Maji war, the workers movement from the 1930, the peasants movements; the struggle for independence from 1940s onwards); and the school system.

Due to these factors, during Tanganyika's independence in 1961, most people in Tanganyika were able to speak and comprehend Kiswahili. Declaration of Kiswahili, soon after independence, in 1962, by the then President Julius Kambarage Nyerere, as the national language, made a dramatic departure from colonial practice. Nyerere himself addressed the parliament in Kiswahili (Mulokozi, 2003). Since then, the policies,

structures and programs for the development and dissemination of Kiswahili language had increased.

In short, Kiswahili language is famous and known by almost all the Tanzanians, and, hence, it is believed to enhance the national unity, communication and other social and economic activities. Local languages are spoken by many people in condition of bilingualism Swahili/local language, even in urban areas. In the rural areas, mainly illiterate people speak local languages as exclusive language. With this, even the writing and publishing, since it targets to address the majority of Tanzanians, is done in Kiswahili language. Therefore, Kiswahili is a dominant language as it has been given the hegemonic power by the government. In this respect, Kiswahili becomes a killer of other languages in writing and publishing.

### ***Marginalization of local languages in writing and publishing***

The hegemonic situation that Kiswahili owns today has weakened the writing and publishing of books for children in other local languages. Since every writer focuses on the wider reading community (school market), all the literary books are either written in Kiswahili or English. However, we do appreciate that most of the literary books for children, especially those which are in the form of stories, originated from local communities. They are retold and translated in either Kiswahili or English. We understand that we have some local translated works like *Fasihi – Simulizi ya Mtanzania: Hadithi, Methali, and Vitendawili* by TUKI and the followed series like *Mbawala na Nchi ya Ujinga; Kavuta Mrina Asali; Watoto Wanaofanana;* and *Mtoto Mrembo*. Apart from TUKI series, there is also *Hadithi za Kikamba* by Legere, and *Kawunju Mkunaardhi* by Mapunda.

What this article questions is that is it not possible to publish some of those literary works in their original languages? Considering the weaknesses of the translations, we suppose that the original knowledge and flavour of the stories are reduced. According to CODE's report, the Children's Book Project in Tanzania by 2015 had facilitated the writing and publishing of more than 350 title books for children in Kiswahili and English languages. What if some of those books could be published in their original local languages? Perhaps, as we stated earlier, most of the targeted audience would not understand the local languages since the majority of readers are Swahili speakers and this is because of the existing social language.

As Msanjila (2003) notes, the marginalisation of local languages in Tanzania is caused by two main factors. First, the government's will to develop only Kiswahili and English in the country; and; secondly, the insufficiency of the language policy in Tanzania. Starting with the government's favour of Kiswahili and English, Msanjila (2003) and Mohammed (2014) argue that the government has a great role to promote or underdevelop languages. With the present Tanzanian context, the government whether willingly or unwillingly, favours the growth of Kiswahili and English languages in one way or another. As stated above, the government declared Kiswahili the national language, it is also a medium of instruction in primary schools, it is used in the media like radio, television, newspapers, magistrate courts, and language of some official documents. English is a compulsory subject in primary schools, language of instruction in secondary and tertiary levels, communicative language in district and high courts, is a language used in investment contracts, and a

language of the official documents. In all these areas of language usage, local languages are left aside.

Secondly, the language policy of Tanzania is also another factor in the underdevelopment of Tanzanian local languages. Hence, the marginalisation of local languages in writing and publishing in local languages (Msanjila, 2003; Mulokozi, 2003). The language policy of Tanzania sounds like it recognises and values of the existence of local languages. However, as stated above, the priorities in the promotion and development are given to Kiswahili and English languages. Though the language policy states that Tanzanian societies shall continue using and feeling proud of their local languages (see article No. 3.2.1), the issue of promoting and developing these local languages have been left to the indigenous and private sectors. There is no emphasis like that of Kiswahili as a national language. Regarding the Kiswahili language, some initiatives have been made by the government to make sure that it is promoted and developed ahead of other languages.

For instance, according to Mulokozi (2003:68), since 1962, the government initiated the following in favour of Kiswahili language development: creation of the Ministry of Culture in 1962; creation of the Institute of Kiswahili Research (IKR) in 1964; creation of Tanzania Publishing House (TPH) in 1966; creation of the National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA) in 1967; creation of the Department of Kiswahili at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1970; establishment of Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages, Zanzibar-TAKILUKI in 1978; establishment of the Zanzibar Kiswahili Council (BAKIZA) in 1986; and creation of *Mfuko wa Utamaduni Tanzania* (Tanzania Culture Fund) in 1998. None of all the

measures above has been put to local languages. Generally, marginalisation of writing and publishing in Tanzanian local languages is being encouraged by the Cultural Policy and the government efforts in promoting Kiswahili and English languages.

***The nation-building question***

The Maji Maji Wars (1905 - 1907) in the Southern Tanzania Mainland are the first incidents that seem to make Kiswahili be considered as a unifying language, nationalism as a historical phenomenon has developed later. These wars involved more than 20 ethnic groups and covered a large part of Southern Tanzania Mainland. This event was very important to the birth of Tanganyikan nationalism since the wars proved that people could go beyond tribal and language borders and build a strong unity. This idea was nurtured and perpetuated during the struggles for independence in the 1930s and 1940s. Kiswahili was used as a language of liberation since many Tanzanians (Karangwa, 2006) understood it. After the independence in 1961, Kiswahili continued to be a common language among Tanzanians throughout the country. Apart from other government initiatives to promote and strengthen Kiswahili, the language was also strongly used as a vector of spreading *Ujamaa na Kujitegemea* policy (Socialism and Self-reliance) in 1967. In short, Kiswahili is taken as an icon of national unity and the implementation of independence through language, and also as a stage of unlocking the country from the shackles of colonialism.

Wafula's (2008) chapter "*Performing Identity in Kiswahili Literature,*" examines Kiswahili literature within the broad fabric of identity politics. National and regional language is one of the most important tools of identity. It is argued that being spoken in East, Central and Southern Africa,



Kiswahili has become an important marker of identity on the continent and beyond. Wafula restates that:

Kiswahili literature is thoroughly hybrid and even the most rigorous defender of a distinct Kiswahili literary identity often finds it impossible to deny or avoid this fluidity ... Kiswahili literature, language and culture best exemplifies this cultural and textual mix, reworking and reconstitution (Wafula, 2008, p. 103).

In this chapter, Wafula poses his arguments by inclining on the facts that Kiswahili is inherently hybrid and essentially multicultural. Kiswahili captures the lives of the Swahili people from a broader perspective. It does not confine itself to one tribe, but rather uses the cultural diversities to its advantage. With this kind of nature, Kiswahili plays a vital role in creating and maintaining broader identity among its speakers. Since Kiswahili is fluid and multicultural, it has a capability of uniting people from small identities to form a broader national diversity. This kind of idea was evident when Nyerere was organising the Tanzanian people to form a strong nation from a numerous cultural diversities. It is still working in Tanzania today.

With respect to the argument above, since 1961, many politicians and government officials have been stressing through their speech that local languages are not allowed to be used in Tanzanian education system with the fear that the use of those local languages would enhance the emergence and establishment of ethnicity and hence disunity that will divide Tanzanians. Instead, every Tanzanian should use Kiswahili, as it is believed to signify the national unity. With this view, the idea has caused many Tanzanians today to fear to use and promote local languages because they are afraid of being accused of promoting tribalism that is an enemy of national unity (Mulokozi, 2003; Karangwa, 2006; Msanjila, 2009).

However, Msanjila (2003) argues that, despite the fear of disuniting Tanzanians by allowing the use of local languages, local languages can be used and promoted in the country and still no harm can happen. Studies have proved that the use of one language in the country does not guarantee the creation of nation unity. A country like Somalia has one dominant language but the instability of its national unity is escalating.

***The unfavourable cultural policy***

From those cultural policy declarations, it can be argued that the implementation of the said declarations is not thorough or clearly evident. "Local languages are the treasure of national history, traditions and customs, technology and culture in general" (Mohammed, 2014:65). Though the language policy seems to recognise the richness of local languages, there are no efforts that have been vested in preserving and protecting the languages. Local languages have been sidelined in education. This tells that they are not valued for the national development and government priorities. Many scholars have commented on the language policy of Tanzania (cf. Msanjila, 2003, 2009; Mulokozi, 2003, 2009; and Mohammed, 2014), as being weak on local languages promotion and protection from perishing. For instance, Msanjila (2003) argues that local languages in Tanzania are in the danger of perishing due to a number of reasons. One of the reasons that precipitate the dying of these languages is the current poor language policy. The current policy stipulates the declarations that have no implementations plan. As Msanjila (2003) argues, due to the stipulations made in the language policy document, one would expect to see the government and language stakeholders giving room to the use of local languages in education, social activities like in the markets, churches, courts, political sermons in the sides of the country, business, and in science and technology.

### **Suggestions for the promotion of writing and publishing in local languages**

Having discussed the prospects and challenges of writing and publishing of children's literature in Tanzanian local languages, the article suggests some measures to be taken to promote writing and publishing in Tanzanian local languages. The suggestions herein concur with those given by Mulokozi (2003 and 2009), Karangwa (2006), Msanjila (2003 and 2009), and Mohammed (2014). Some of these suggestions are:

Firstly, the government should allow its citizens to use their local languages freely. Citizens should not be threatened that by speaking their local languages they are threatening the national unity (Karangwa, 2006). This will make Tanzanians feel proud of their local languages because of using them. If they keep deprived of the use of their local languages, there is a danger of the disappearance of these languages in future (Msanjila, 2003). If the local languages are being discouraged, there is no way children's literature or literature in general can be written and published.

Secondly, the language policy of Tanzania should be reviewed in favour of local languages. The promotion, research, and development of local languages should go hand in hand with the strategic plans on how to implement the said stipulations. There should be some initiatives like those of the promotion of Kiswahili and English. For instance, in promoting Kiswahili language, the government adopted it as a national language in 1962; it was adopted as significant vector of *Ujamaa* ideology in 1967; it was adopted as the official language in 1967; and it was made the language of instruction in pre- and primary school education (Mulokozi, 2003). The

writing and publishing in local languages should be strategized and the plans how to implement them (Msanjila, 2009; Mohammed, 2014).

Thirdly, to promote the use of local languages in the mass media and acknowledge the local languages legally. This is because apart from Kiswahili and English, it seems the other local languages seem to be discouraged in the public domain. The constitution should be amended and declare about the recognition and the value of these local languages. If the suggestions above can be worked out, it will be easy to write and publish in local languages since the audience will be able to consume the printed materials (Msanjila, 2003; 2009).

### **Conclusion**

This article aimed at examining the prospects and challenges of writing and publishing in other local languages spoken in Tanzania. It is argued in this article that writing and publishing in other local languages is an area that should be explored in order to tap into the rich tangible and intangible heritage documented in these languages. It is also argued that the current language policy provisions in Tanzania do not provide the desired outcomes and enabling policy environment for writing and publishing children literature in other local languages. Kiswahili language has dominated the language use and hence writing and publishing of children's literature confines itself in Kiswahili. This is due to the assurance of getting the wider audience that consumes the published materials. Suggestions have been made that the government should allow Tanzanians to use their local languages freely different from the current situation where local languages seem to be illegal in the official and public use. This is because of the national unity that is believed to be carried by Kiswahili language. Also,

language policy has been accused of being old and inappropriate. The review should be made to accommodate the local languages promotion, preservation, accommodation in order to reflect Tanzania's linguistic diversity through writing and publishing in other local languages

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