Electronic Publishing of Shona Literature in Zimbabwe: An Overview

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Abstract

The publishing industry is key to the publication and distribution of Shona literature textbooks. Despite having so many literature books written in Shona and the majority of people being Shona speakers, constituting at least 75% of the total population in the country, the publishing industry is reluctant to digitise the publishing of Shona literature, thus, disadvantaging the native speakers of the opportunity to learn and interact on e-platforms using their indigenous language when compared with their counterparts who use English. This chapter seeks to show how colonial and postcolonial language policies have fuelled the status quo of Shona literature in the country. The chapter uncovers the benefits of digitising Shona literature and the challenges and opportunities that it presents to various stakeholders in Zimbabwe. The chapter is guided by Glocalisation theory whose emphasis is on the customisation of products and services intended for the global market to suit local cultures and needs. The chapter recommends that the publishing industry uses digital platforms in different ways to overcome the problems it is currently facing so that e-literature content such as proverbs, songs, games, folktales, poetry, riddles, novels, short stories, and plays is accessible in a more interactive way to native speakers scattered all over the globe in formats that are compatible with the new technology. In addition, the chapter recommends that fostering an environment that encourages all parties involved to embrace technology in their publishing endeavours is the only way to preserve, revitalise, and disseminate Shona literature through e-platforms in an interactive fashion. The study employed qualitative techniques, which include in-depth interviews with purposefully selected key informants, and secondary data analysis. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to select participants such as writers, publishers, students, classroom practitioners, tech companies, and parents, among others. Thematic web-like data analysis was used in analysing the data.