

THE CHALLENGE AND THE CRISIS FACING THE EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING  
INDUSTRY IN THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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## ABSTRACT

In this study the role of the educational publisher as an information intermediary is considered. The focus is on the developmental role of the publisher, against the background of the information age the world is entering today. The publishing industry is regarded as both a vehicle for and the product of development, which entails a twofold responsibility: the development of society in general and the development of the industry in particular. This study highlights the role of the publisher in the development of society, and it is argued that the recent changes in the education system and the language policy potentially offer a great challenge to educational publishers in South Africa to help create suitable educational material in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the new curriculum, thereby contributing to the development of South African society as a whole. However, developments since 1994, when the new political dispensation came into effect, have practically halted the development input of publishers in the new education system and created a severe crisis for the educational publishing industry.

## KEY TERMS

information age	developing society
information society	Curriculum 2005
information	National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
knowledge	language policy
information literacy	publishing industry
lifelong learning	information intermediary
development	Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA)
development cycle	Department of Education

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Synopsis

In this chapter the aim of the present study is discussed, followed by an exposition of the research problems, as well as the methodology and approach followed in the study. Some background to the research problems is given before an outline of the structure of the study as a whole is given.

#### 1.1 The aim of the study

The aim of this study is to consider the role of the educational publisher in South Africa as an information intermediary (North 1998: 136), with a focus on the developmental role of the publisher, against the background of the information age the world is entering today. This study supports the view that the publishing industry is both a vehicle for and the product of development, which entails a twofold responsibility of the publisher: the development of society in general and the development of the industry in particular. Because of the limited scope of the present study the focus is primarily on the role of the educational publisher in the general development of society.

#### 1.2 Research problems

Two primary issues are dealt with in this study, namely

- the challenge facing the publishing industry regarding the development of educational material for the new curriculum, and
- the crisis experienced in the publishing industry.

It is argued that the change to an outcomes-based education (OBE) system and the change in the new language policy necessitate the development of new educational

material that will facilitate the principle of lifelong learning, a concept that is central to the new curriculum. Education and language are regarded as major factors in the development of human resources, which can be regarded as the human capital which together with structural capital constitute the intellectual capital of a society (cf. Edvinsson & Malone 1997). It is therefore argued that the new education system and the new language policy for education are two factors that potentially have a major impact on the developmental role of the publisher, in the light of the fact that educational publishing constitutes the bulk of publishing activities in South Africa.

However, developments on the educational scene since 1994 have effectively prevented educational publishers from being involved in the implementation of the new educational policy. In fact, the industry has been brought to its knees, so much so that the continued existence of the industry is severely threatened. In this study the developments since 1994 are discussed and an attempt is made at finding the underlying reasons for the present crisis. Possible solutions to the problem are also discussed. Since a thorough investigation of the issues under discussion falls outside the scope of this study, mere cursory comments are made. The implications of the present crisis in the publishing industry for development are discussed briefly and some suggestions are made regarding areas that merit further research.

### 1.3 Methodology

This study is a literature study that touches on a number of fields, namely information science, publishing, development, education and language planning. The nature of the study is descriptive and the scope is broad. The issues discussed are therefore dealt with in a rather cursory manner. The literature researched consisted mainly of scholarly publications in the fields of information science and publishing. Various government policy documents as well as numerous newspaper articles were also consulted, the latter dealing mainly with the crises in the education system and the publishing industry.



#### 1.4 Point of departure

The present study takes an information science perspective as its point of departure, with studies in publishing as its matrix. The research is placed within the realm of the information age, with the publisher being assigned the role of an information intermediary (North 1998: 136), as a major creator of information products in the form of books and other written material. Being an information intermediary entails *inter alia* acting as a gatekeeper of knowledge, an agent of change and a facilitator of development.

The focus of this study is on the developmental role of the publisher, development being equated with the process of informatization. Although the study concentrates on the practicalities of the challenges facing the South African publishing industry and the crisis currently experienced, the issues are ultimately discussed in terms of the impact they have on the developmental role of the publisher as an information intermediary in a developing society, striving towards becoming an information society. Because of the primary role of educational publishing in the South African industry, the emphasis is on educational publishing, which is fairly narrowly defined as the publishing of school textbooks.

#### 1.5 Background

Generally speaking this study deals with publishing issues, against the background of the new era the world is entering at present, namely, the information age. The information revolution brings with it a totally new approach to the concepts of information and knowledge as well as the emergence of the concept of the information society. In order to understand the notions of the information age and the information society better, attention should first be given to the concepts of data, information and knowledge.

##### 1.5.1 The concepts of data, information and knowledge

In any discussion on the information age or the information society, the terms ‘data’, ‘information’, ‘knowledge’, and to a lesser extent, ‘wisdom’ are bound to crop up.

However, these terms are often used in an extremely fuzzy fashion (Collier 1993: 37), or interchangeably (Debons, Horn & Cronenweth 1988). Since these terms are of importance in this study some clarification of the terms and the concepts they represent is necessary.

*Data* refer to letters, numbers, symbols, graphs, and so on, used to represent events and their state, and are organized according to formal rules and conventions. Collier (1993: 37) suggests that the term ‘data’ should always have the prefix ‘raw’. Raw data is not of use to anyone and needs to be interpreted before it can become information that can be utilized. *Information* can be defined in various ways depending on whether it is regarded as a resource, a commodity, communication, perception of pattern, or facts (Machet 1997: 3-5). In this study information is defined as data in a processed form, in other words, data that have been “considered, analysed or verified” (Collier 1993: 37). Information can be presented in oral, written or visual form or can be stored in the memory. In the information age information is increasingly being presented in printed and electronic form.

*Knowledge* refers to information that has been processed: if information is understood and applied in creative and innovative thinking in order to solve a perceived problem, it becomes knowledge. Put differently, knowledge refers to processed information that is used by an individual or a group with a view to appropriate actions. Knowledge includes everything present in someone’s mind, for instance, opinions, viewpoints, suppositions and theories that he/she regards as true and that can influence his/her behaviour (Machet 1997: 5). Knowledge that is externalized, for instance, as speech, written text or visual images can serve as new data or information for use by others.

The difference between information and knowledge can be described in various ways. Wilson (1998: 31-32) describes knowledge as “the meaning we attach to information”, while Welch 1998 (*Online & CD-ROM Review* 1998: 107) regards it as follows: “knowledge is not simply an agglomeration of information but the ability of the individual or the company to act meaningfully on the basis of that information”. Sayed & De Jager

(1997: 7) maintain: “Information is inert and passive, whereas knowledge generation is a creative process requiring active engagement and critical thinking skills.” North (1998: 54) mentions the importance of not only being able to consume and utilize information, but also to apply innovation and creativity in order to change information into knowledge that can be used by others. The ability to create knowledge from information is particularly important in the development process, since it is this ability of individuals in a society that contributes to the transformation of a society into an information society.

### 1.5.2 The concept of the information society

The information society is a concept closely connected to the information age. Braman (1997: 2) points out that the problems, issues and trends of the information society have been prevalent for some time, and in the 19th century sociologists already began studying the impact of the use of new information technologies. However, it was not until the 1960s that the term ‘information society’ was used, by the Japanese scholar Tadeo Umesao, who was the first scholar to conceptualize the process of ‘informatization’ (Braman 1997: 2). Daniel Bell, the USA sociologist and author of the classic work *The coming of post-industrial society* (1963), preferred the term ‘post-industrial society’ (Bell 1976: ix).

During the 1970s a number of European governments began investigating the effects of the process of informatization on society, as suggested by Nora and Minc in 1980 in their influential report to the government of France. These scholars were the first to use the term *informatisation* to indicate a process of change leading to an information society (Dordick & Wang 1993: 13). In the 1980s European governments began responding to warnings about loss of economic position, and a ceding of control of important communication structures to US-based corporations, by introducing research and development programmes and experiments with the use of new information technologies. In the 1990s the USA and the countries of the former Soviet Union began to approach telecommunications and information policy as a distinct area of policy-making. By the late 1990s, the term ‘the information society’ has become widely used for a variety of

purposes, meaning different things to different people (Braman 1997: 3-5).

Three categories of approaches to the concept of the information society can be distinguished, namely, those that focus on the information society as a set of effects, those that regard the information society as a thing, and those that focus on the process that leads to the establishment of an information society (Braman 1997: 5). The last of these categories is the angle of this study. The process of informatization has been conceptualized in at least three different ways: as the replacing of one basic type of economic activity with another; as a change in the relative weight of informational activities; and as a set of techniques used by capital in its processes of globalization and penetration within societies (Braman 1997: 8).

- The replacement of agriculture and industry with information

The view put forward by the first scholars to conceptualize the notion of the information society, Umesao and Masuda in Japan and Daniel Bell in the USA, holds that human societies go through a unilinear process of development that has moved over the ages from the earliest hunter-gatherer societies through agriculture and industry to information. This viewpoint focuses on the replacement of the activity of manufacturing with that of information production and processing, and the extent of activity within the information sector of the economy is used as an indicator of the degree of development of a society. Furthermore, besides the emphasis on quantitative change there is also a belief in qualitative change in that informatization is a social process that brings about a change in the nature of human society (Braman 1997: 8).

- Increase in the information-intensity of all activities

A more common view holds that agricultural and industrial activities will not disappear, but rather that informational activity will increase proportionally, and agricultural and industrial activities will become more information-intensive. According to the simplest versions of this perspective the convergence of computing and communication

technologies after World War II provided the stimulus for the process of informatization (Braman 1997: 9; Dordick & Wang 1993: 20). Toffler & Toffler (1995) describe the process of informatization in terms of waves of change. They regard the information age as the third wave of change that the human race is undergoing, the agricultural and the industrial revolutions being the first and second waves respectively. However, they do admit that not all societies develop along this path unilinearly - some may be experiencing different waves at the same time (Toffler & Toffler 1995: 22-23), South Africa being a case in point.

- Spreading of information technologies to the benefit of capital

A third approach to the process of informatization is to regard it as a set of techniques used by capital to extend its influence sphere by means of globalization, accumulation and deeper penetration of societies. By increasingly using information technologies people become more dependent on the products of transnational companies. Braman (1997: 10) points out that whether one accepts this ideology in total or not, it is clear that there is an increase in the kinds of information and information processing that are commoditized, and that the concept of the information society is used as a marketing tool in various ways.

Researchers who focus on the process of informatization, point out various characteristics of an information society, some of which are relevant for this study. The first important feature is that of an awareness of information (Britz 1997: 1), which suggests a given *attitude* towards information. Another feature is that of scientific decision-making and problem-solving (Shillinglaw 1988: 12), which suggests creative thinking *skills* used to transform information into knowledge. Related to this is the increase in scientific research (Britz 1997: 2), by means of which highly-regarded theoretical knowledge is created, which can in turn be utilized in problem-solving (Shillinglaw 1988: 12), suggesting a *cyclical relationship* between the creation and the utilization of information and knowledge. Information as an enhancer of the quality of life (Martin 1988: 40), suggests a relation between information and *development*.

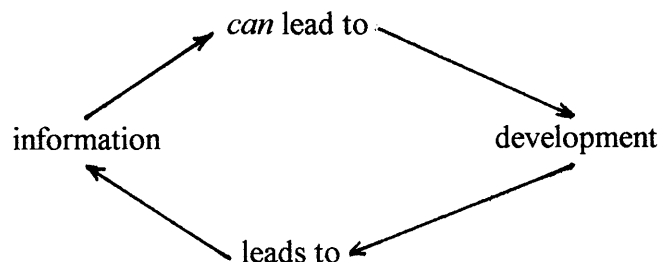
Dordick & Wang (1993: 15) point out that there are three key elements underlying most theories on the information society, namely, technology, economic growth and social change, which also happen to be the core concepts of most development theories.

Although the two sets of theories have different perspectives, in an increasing number of developing countries informatization is being regarded as an essential part of the development process (Dordick & Wang 1993: 15). It is therefore worthwhile to explore the issue of development in more detail, and to consider the role that informatization plays in the development process.

### 1.5.3 The issue of development

The concept of development is difficult to define, and various definitions, from a variety of perspectives abound. In this study a “context-sensitive” definition of development, as proposed by North (1998: 62) is used. The perspective taken in this study is that in the information age no person is able to function optimally in his/her environment without being information literate, that is, possessing the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills to handle information effectively (Marais 1994: 15).

One of the premises of this study is that there is a direct relationship between information and development, with the level of development of an organism being determined *inter alia* by the ability of an organism to deal with information (North 1998: 60). North (1998: 35) adapts the notion of the relationship between information and development and suggests that whereas information *can* lead to development, development *necessarily* leads to the creation of new information. She represents the relationship between information and development schematically as follows (North 1998: 35):



In order for any development to be of lasting value it needs to be sustained by society. North (1997: 34, 1998: 61) points out that for *sustainable* development to take place, new information needs to be fed back into the cycle. In other words, the development brought about by the initial information should lead to innovative problem solving and creative thinking, which result in knowledge that is then used as new information to serve as input for further development. In this way, a continuous cycle of information leading to development, and development leading to information is brought about.

The above discussion implies that in order for development in a society to be an ongoing process the members of that society need to be equipped to deal with information adequately. Not only should they become aware of the importance of information for their everyday existence, but they should also know how to find and use information. Most importantly, as many members of a society as possible need to develop critical thinking skills (Marais 1994: 16; Sayed & De Jager 1997: 6) so that they can transform information into knowledge that can be used by others for innovative problem-solving. In this way the value of the human capital in a society can be enhanced, thereby ultimately contributing to the enhancement of the intellectual capital of that society (cf. Edvinsson & Malone 1997: 13). Developing critical thinking skills among members of a society can be done by means of information literacy programmes.

#### 1.5.3.1 Information literacy

Information literacy can be regarded as a basic life skill for people living in the information age (e.g. North 1997: 46). One of the most frequently used definitions of information literacy is that of the American Library Association (ALA), whose report on Information Literacy in 1989 attracted worldwide attention:

To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information ....

Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people

prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand (Behrens 1994: 315).

Tying in the above definition with North's (1998) view on development, one could say that someone who has the ability to locate, evaluate and use information effectively is someone who can handle information adequately. People who know how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them are able to change information into knowledge that can be used as new information by others. Such people are therefore able to both survive and prosper in their environment and contribute to sustainable development in their society. In keeping with the trend of the 1990s (Behrens 1994: 313, 318), this study regards information literacy as the other end of a literacy continuum that begins with basic literacy.

One of the trends apparent in the literature of the nineties is that of education for information literacy (Behrens 1994: 317). During the late 1980s there was a growing perception that information skills needed to be taught by integrating them into the existing curricula. This has resulted in a change of the way the teaching/learning process is viewed. Within the traditional paradigm, teaching and learning depended to a large extent on the teacher/lecturer and the textbook. Within the new paradigm, learning is regarded "not as transmission of information but rather as the generation of critical skills in learners to search for, evaluate and use information" (Sayed & De Jager 1997: 7). In the teaching process the focus should therefore be on guiding and directing learners to ways of solving problems or acquiring understanding rather than to limit them to single sources of information. According to various authors, the major educational challenge of the information age is to move from content to process and to equip students with skills to use information independently rather than to rely on the teacher/lecturer. In this way they will become independent learners, equipped to learn throughout their lives, in other words, lifelong learners (Sayed & De Jager 1997: 7).

In the light of the above discussion it can therefore be stated that the primary aim of the development process should be to educate and train people to become information literate so that they can become lifelong learners. In this way they will be equipped to create



knowledge that can be used as new information and input to the development process. In developing societies there is a crucial need for the creation of *indigenous* knowledge. This need becomes apparent when the international knowledge system is considered more closely.

#### 1.5.3.2 Development and the international knowledge system

Scholarly publishing represents the most advanced level of knowledge creation and distribution in a society (Altbach 1987: xi). It follows therefore that universities and other academic and research institutions are most important producers of knowledge in a society. They are also a key source of training for skilled manpower. Furthermore, they educate research workers with a higher level of skills who may remain within the universities as teachers/researchers or go into positions of considerable authority in government or industry (Altbach 1989: 24).

There is a huge imbalance with regard to the creation and distribution of knowledge in the world today, with universities in the large industrialized nations acting as the major producers and distributors of scholarly knowledge (Altbach 1987: 63; 1989: 4-5). While these universities stand in the centre of the knowledge system of the world, academic institutions of other societies, particularly developing societies, are relegated to the periphery of the system, thereby becoming consumers of scholarly research and publications produced in the major industrialized countries.

This situation has a detrimental effect on development in the societies on the periphery because the smaller societies, especially developing societies, become dependent on the major producers and distributors of knowledge (Altbach 1987: 9; Zeleza 1996: 33). An aggravating factor in this regard is that the knowledge produced by the major societies often have no relevance for others and can therefore not be utilized in a meaningful way as input to development in these societies (Altbach 1987: 18; Nicholls & Majid 1989: 258). Thus, while the expansion of knowledge is a challenge to scholars in any society, it poses a particular challenge to scholars in developing societies (Altbach 1987: 64).

Universities and other academic and research institutions in developing countries have an important role to play to help build a body of indigenous knowledge that suits local needs. On the one hand this entails a greater output in terms of scholarly research and publication. On the other hand it entails the training of students at tertiary level who can contribute to the process of knowledge creation and distribution by becoming scholars and researchers producing new knowledge, or by becoming leaders within society at large, who make informed decisions in problem situations, thereby contributing to development.

In order for a society to have people educated and trained at tertiary level, there needs to be a good education system which supplies quality education at all levels that can serve as a solid foundation for tertiary education. In the information age this entails the incorporation of information education at all levels in the education system, to ensure that students become information literate people. Information literate people become able and competent citizens, who contribute to the development of a society in general by applying information to problem situations and generating knowledge that can be used by others as new information and input to further development.

It is clear that the utilizing of information and the creation of knowledge is most important in any society. However, in order for knowledge to be of value to anyone it needs to be disseminated. It is in this regard that the publisher plays an important role, as an essential component of the information infrastructure of a society.

#### 1.5.3.3 The role of the publishing industry

Cilliers (1992: 4-5) points out that a society needs both a knowledge industry and an information infrastructure to facilitate the acquisition and effective use of information. The knowledge industry is focused on the creation, dissemination and storage of information and knowledge, and includes computer systems, research laboratories and institutions of higher education. The information infrastructure is vital to the functioning of the knowledge industry, and entails *inter alia* a good network of libraries, databases

and databanks; a well-functioning telecommunications network; and a flourishing publishing industry. The publishing industry has its place in the information chain, which refers to “the process whereby a valuable raw material, namely ideas, turns into a digestible consumer product, in the form of information and the higher form of information we call knowledge” (Duff 1997: 179).

The publishing industry is an essential part of the information infrastructure in that it contributes to both the creation and the distribution of information products, namely, books and other written material. The written word is still the major means of disseminating knowledge, and the education system one of the most important consumers and creators of knowledge (Altbach 1987: xi). In developing societies especially educational publishers have a major role to play, given the importance of textbooks in the education systems of these countries (Altbach 1987: 113; Farrell & Heyneman 1989: 5; Crabbe 1998: 1). The educational sector plays an important role in the publishing industry, especially in developing countries, so much so that publishers could not survive without the educational market, unless they are sustained through subsidies or external control (Altbach 1987: 6).

The publishing industry is an integral part of the cultural and intellectual system of any society, and operates within the context of both external and internal environmental factors (Altbach 1987: 3-5). What is of relevance for this study is that the publishing industry is part of a larger environment, by which it is directly influenced. On the other hand, the publishing industry can and does exert influence on the external environment (Bailey 1970: 15). In this process of mutual involvement the publisher acts as an information intermediary (North 1998: 136).

The publishing industry plays an important role in development in that it creates information products, specifically books, that are central to the creation and distribution of information and knowledge. However, in order to contribute to sustainable development in a society, there needs to be a flourishing indigenous publishing industry in the country, which creates books that are relevant to the needs of the particular society

(Altbach 1992: 1; Montagnes 1992: 233). This would involve a continuum of publications, from materials used for adult basic education and training (ABET) to scholarly publications.

The impact of a flourishing local publishing industry on the development of a society can clearly be seen when publishing is placed in an international context. The major industrialized countries of the world, who form the knowledge centre of the world, have strong indigenous publishing industries, while the opposite is true of many developing countries, especially in Africa (Altbach 1987: 22; Chakava 1996: 65; Zeleza 1996: 33). This situation necessarily leads to inequalities in the distribution of knowledge, a factor that also has an effect on South Africa, as a developing society.

#### 1.5.4 The South African context

Before the South African situation receives attention, it must be stated that it is difficult to discuss any relevant issue relating to South African society without taking into account both the 'old' and the 'new' South Africa. The 'old' South Africa falls largely outside the scope of this study, although it has a direct bearing on many issues dealt with here. Because the focus of the present study is very much on the 'new' South Africa, discussion of the situation under the previous dispensation is limited to matters that have a direct bearing on the topic under discussion.

South African society is characterized by gross inequalities and imbalances, which can be ascribed to various factors, amongst them the apartheid policies of the previous government. Since a new political dispensation came into being in April 1994, the country has been undergoing a process of transformation. The new government is placing particular emphasis on redressing the imbalances and inequities that exist in society, with a focus on the issues of development and nation-building. One of the five key programmes of the government's Restructuring and Development Programme (RDP) is that of human resource development (e.g. CSIR 1996: 1), which is regarded as both a goal of the RDP and a requirement for achieving other goals of the RDP (DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 1). (The RDP

has however been shelved in favour of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy announced in 1996 - cf. Hartley 1998.)

In terms of international indicators of human development and economic competitiveness, South Africa can be regarded as a developing society, because of the low levels of life-expectancy, basic health, skills and productivity of the majority of the population (DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 7-9). Furthermore, in terms of the perspective taken in this study, South Africa can be described as a developing country in view of the fact that the majority of its people are not functionally literate and therefore not information literate (e.g. DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 8; Fairer-Wessels 1990: 362; September 1993: 13-17). This situation suggests an urgent need for development in South Africa.

Two important factors that play a role in the development of South Africa's people are those of the education system and language policy. Education is regarded as a major way by means of which to empower people, especially those who were disadvantaged under the previous system through inequalities in education (DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 2). The new education policy has the "over-arching goal" (DE 1995: Ch. 4, § 5) of enabling individuals to value, have access to and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality. Language policy is seen as an effective way of controlling access to power, and because of the wrongs of the past, a language policy needs to be developed that would work towards "equality, democracy and national and economic development" (LANGTAG 1996a: 92-92).

#### 1.5.4.1 Education in South Africa

Scholarly research and publications in South Africa compare well with other developing countries (Aina & Mabawonku, 1996: 73; DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 7; Gibbs, 1995: 76).

However, it is clear that there is much room for improvement in higher education (DE 1997a: 21). Since tertiary education is a major vehicle for the development of creative thinking skills in a society, it follows that serious attention needs to be given to the issue of good quality higher education. However, no good tertiary education can take place in a

society without a solid foundation laid by primary and secondary education.

For various reasons, amongst others the policy of segregated education departments for different racial groups, the quality of education received by the majority of South Africans has not been very high. As a result vast numbers of people in this country are still functionally illiterate, despite having received a number of years' schooling. Other students, who have completed 12 years' of schooling and are enrolled at institutions of higher education, still lack the necessary skills to cope with the demands of tertiary education (Behrens 1995: 258; DE 1997a: Ch. 2, § 2.30, 2.32; Pretorius *in press*). A good education system that provides quality education in both the primary and the secondary phase is therefore of crucial importance in South Africa today.

Since the new dispensation came into being in South Africa in 1994, much attention has been given to the issue of education. One of the major changes that have taken place in the country so far is the amalgamation of 17 different departments into one national department and nine regional departments of education. Two important Acts of Parliament that have significantly changed the education system in South Africa are the Education Policy Act and the Schools Policy Act of November 1996, which gave considerable power and autonomy to the various regional departments of education.

#### 1.5.4.2 The language situation in South Africa

South Africa has an estimated population of 41 244 (Central Statistics 1996: Ch. 3, § 3.1). Eleven major languages are spoken in South Africa, namely, Afrikaans, English, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu, as well as ±82 other African, Asian and European minority languages (LANGTAG 1996b: 2-3).

Whereas English is a major international language, the other languages are all indigenous languages. It is conjectured that Afrikaans originated from various 17th and 18th century Germanic dialects spoken by the first Dutch settlers who arrived at the Cape. These dialects gradually underwent changes due to regular contact with Khoi speakers as well as

English, French, Malay and Portuguese settlers (Grobler 1990: 9). The African languages of South Africa form part of the south-eastern zone of the “fairly homogeneous” (Schuring 1990: 25) Bantu languages of Africa, estimated to be about 600 in number. (Note: the term ‘Bantu’ was introduced in 1857 by the German philologist, Dr W H I Bleek, to distinguish a particular language family in Africa.)

In 1910 when the Union of South Africa was formed English and Dutch became the official languages of the Union, with Afrikaans replacing Dutch in 1925. While the African languages enjoyed official status in the various former homelands, it is only since the interim constitution was published in 1994 that eight of these languages have become official languages of the country as a whole. In December 1995 the establishment of a Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) was announced. The main task of LANGTAG was to advise the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) on devising a coherent plan for South Africa “as a matter of urgency” (LANGTAG 1996: I), given the observed tendency to unilingualism in the country, as well as the fact that “the Government has failed to secure a significant position for language matters within the national development plan” (LANGTAG 1996: I). It seems therefore that from the outset the new government was not keen to promote the indigenous African languages.

Education policy and language policy overlap in the area of language policy for education, since particular policy needs to be laid down regarding the languages used for learning and teaching. In South Africa past policies and practices, as well as the devastating effect of the Soweto riots in 1976 have led to a situation where specifically African children are at a great disadvantage today. This matter is addressed directly in the new language policy for education in South Africa in that a student has the right to choose any one of the 11 official languages as the language of learning (DE 1997b). Potentially this policy has far-reaching effects, not only for learners and educators, but especially also for publishers in South Africa.

### 1.5.5 The South African publishing industry

The South African publishing industry shows great similarities with the publishing industries in other developing countries and has had to cope with many of the problems typical to Africa. However, despite these factors there has been “a significant development of indigenous and critical publishing in South Africa” (Altbach 1992: 19). One of the main reasons for the development of strong indigenous publishing lay in the hegemony of white supporters of apartheid in the industry (Machet 1993). In 1994 the South African publishing industry was described as the biggest and most sophisticated publishing industry in Africa (Czerniewicz 1994: 7), with a retail value of approximately R1,2 billion (Van Rooyen 1994: 4). Educational publishing constituted 75-80% of publishing in South Africa, with 80% of this market being served by three major publishers, namely, Naspers, Perskor and Haum-De Jager.

As is mentioned above (cf. § 1.4.3.3), the publishing industry operates within the context of both internal and external factors. An external factor that has characterized South African publishing in the past has been the influence of the government of the day, a situation that seems set to continue in the new dispensation. In the first place, censorship laws severely impeded publishers in their task of disseminating information (e.g. Machet 1993: 172-173). In the second place, publishers who had the same political inclination as the Nationalist government were unfairly advantaged, especially in the most profitable sector, namely educational publishing (e.g. Moss 1993: 25-26; Oliphant 1993: 101).

Like in many other developing countries, the educational sector forms the backbone of the publishing industry in South Africa, the term ‘educational publishing’ being used here to refer to publishing for the school market, as against ‘tertiary publishing’ which entails publishing for the university and technikon market. Educational publishing has traditionally been defined very narrowly and focused largely on the publishing of textbooks. Although the focus on “the lucrative textbook market” (Moss 1993: 22) has been criticized in some circles, the primary role of the textbook in the education system of specifically developing countries is widely accepted, and much of the literature on the



development of educational material in these countries focus on textbook development (e.g. Farrel & Heyneman 1989: 5; Gopinathan 1989: 2; Hummel 1988: 13-17; McCallum 1995: 128). In this study the term ‘educational publishing’ is therefore used to refer to publishing for the school market, with a focus on textbooks as against other educational material.

Educational publishers that have traditionally been involved in textbook provision in South Africa can be divided into three categories. The major player in the field has been indigenous South African publishers, who have dominated the market “through either a set of privileged relationships to the state and its organs, or an ability to manipulate that relationship” (Moss 1993: 25). The companies, mainly Afrikaans, which fall into this group have been severely criticized for their stake in the implementation of the apartheid policies as well as the ideology of Christian National Education of the previous government, although it is acknowledged that some English-owned companies “have also participated with gusto, and considerable gain” (Moss 1993: 26) in the previous education system.

The second group consists of transnational or multinational companies which have since 1990, when political changes became apparent, become “an increasingly important factor in educational publishing” (Moss 1993: 26), with many planning their entry or re-entry into the South African educational market. The third group were the smaller anti-apartheid publishers, who have “historically largely been excluded from textbook provision” (Moss 1993: 26), but have focused on the publication of non-formal and supplementary educational material. When the political changes started taking place in South Africa, these smaller publishers lost their main reason for existence, and have since been taken up in the mainstream.

Since 1994 the situation in the publishing industry has changed significantly. Historical divisions have become blurred and “for the first time, educational publishers are cooperating in the face of a common threat” (McCallum in *The Bookseller* 1996: 21). However, cooperation among publishers has not enabled the industry to weather the

storm, and today publishers are fighting for survival in the face of the educational crisis in the country.

#### 1.5.5.1 The challenge facing the publishing industry

The change in focus of the new education model necessitates the development of radically new and different teaching materials. Furthermore, the change in the language policy for education brings the choice of language for publication to the fore. The South African publishing industry is therefore confronted by a great challenge to play a major part in the implementation of the new curriculum through materials development, thereby playing a constructive role in the development of South Africa's learners, and ultimately also the intellectual capital of South African society as a whole.

#### 1.5.5.2 The crisis facing the publishing industry

The publishing industry is experiencing a severe crisis at present, as a direct result of the crisis in education. Because educational publishing forms the backbone of the South African publishing industry, a collapse in this sector has a direct impact on the rest of the industry. The crisis in the publishing industry has serious implications, not only for the industry, but ultimately for South African society as a whole.

### 1.6 The structure of the study

The aim of the study, as well as the research problems, point of departure and methodology are discussed in this chapter, and some background to the issues dealt with in the study is provided. The remainder of the study is structured as follows:

In Chapter 2 an overview on the publishing industry is given. A brief discussion of the development of modern book publishing is followed by a general discussion of the publishing environment. Publishing in the international context is dealt with in some detail, with reference to the developing world, specifically the African continent.

In Chapter 3 the South African publishing industry is discussed. A historical overview is given, before the situation in 1994 is described in some detail. A number of key issues relevant to the future of publishing in South Africa in 1994 are discussed, focusing on the developmental role of the publisher and the facilitating role of the government.

Chapter 4 deals with the concept of development, against the background of the information age and the information society. The view is expressed that the publisher, as an information intermediary, has an important role to play in development. The South African context is discussed, and it is argued that two areas of particular concern regarding development in South Africa are those of the education system and language policy.

In Chapter 5 the challenge facing the South African publishing industry is briefly discussed, before the current crisis in the industry is discussed. Particular attention is given to developments in the educational sphere since 1994.

Chapter 6 contains an analysis of the present crisis and comments on the implications of the crisis for development in South Africa. The limitations of the study are mentioned and areas for further research are suggested.

## CHAPTER 2

### PUBLISHING: AN OVERVIEW

#### 2.0 Synopsis

In this chapter some background is given on the publishing industry. A brief overview is given of the history of book publishing, with the focus on the developments of the past three decades. A broad background on the publishing environment is given, with the emphasis on external environmental factors.

#### 2.1 Introduction

In the information age experienced by the world today, the publisher plays an important role as an information intermediary. In order to explain this role of the publisher, it is necessary to provide some general background on the publishing industry as such, including the international context within which publishing takes place.

#### 2.2 A brief overview of the development of modern book publishing

Publishing as we know it in the West today has its origins in the 18th century, when the belief started to grow among the common people of the Western world that learning could be acquired through reading (Dessauer 1974: 3). A substantial number of two million titles were published worldwide during this time. During the 19th century even more significant development took place, and in the region of eight million titles were published. Some publishing houses still active today were founded during this time, for instance, Harper & Row (1817) and Johns Hopkins University Press (1878). Most of the publishing houses active in the United States today, such as McGraw-Hill and Prentice-Hall, were, however, founded in the 20th century.

The modern era for the book industry dates back to the post-World War II period.

Although some of the trends in publishing had been initiated before this time, the educational boom and the general prosperity after the war in particular were major factors in the development of the modern publishing industry. Not long after the end of the war, the era of the paperbound book was born. Soon after this development ‘quality’ paperbacks found their way onto the market, specifically the educational market. The growth of education on all levels in fact made an impact on the whole book publishing industry, which was stimulated by a massive inflow of state funds into educational institutions and libraries. At the same time there was a consistent increase in affluence, as well as a growing number of enrolments at school and college levels (Dessauer 1974: 6).

The 1960s became the merger period, as has been the case in South Africa since the early 1990s, when a great deal of merging and acquiring started taking place. During this time, a number of large companies bought up publishers, for instance, General Electric bought General Learning in America, and CBS bought Holt Rinehart (*The Bookseller* 1993: 26). On the positive side, the mergers injected the publishing industry with resources as well as new management and business acumen, of which there was a serious shortage. On the other hand, the power of ultimate decision and policy making was often placed in the hands of people “unfamiliar with books, their peculiarities, and their markets” (Dessauer 1974: 8).

During the 1960s book publishing flourished, not only in the USA, but also in the UK and Europe. However, the boom period was slowed down in the 1970s, because of factors such as a general decline in economic conditions, lower enrolment figures in schools and colleges, and cuts in government support for schools, libraries and research. Educational publishers especially were affected by these developments. Nevertheless, during this time the industry matured and advanced greatly, and the combination of fiscal resources and management skills enabled the book industry to continue growing (Dessauer 1974: 9). Publishing became an increasingly international industry, dominated by large companies, and with much “cross-fertilisation” (*The Bookseller* 1993: 26) between the UK and the USA.

In the 1980s the large American companies became more involved in professional and academic publishing. During the 1980s many deals took place in the USA, but this has slowed down in the 1990s. In the UK, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult for small and medium-sized companies to stay independent. The broad area of professional, educational, academic and STM publishing especially is increasingly being dominated by 12 to 15 large, wealthy international companies (*The Bookseller* 1993: 28).

An important factor in publishing today is the role of technology. Besides the whole new field of electronic publishing that has been opened up by the availability of sophisticated new technologies, the traditional publishing process is also being affected. For instance, the different phases in the production process can be speeded up, enabling “just-in-time delivery” (Toffler & Toffler 1995: 40) to take place.

It is against this background that the discussion of the publishing industry in the rest of the chapter should be viewed.

### 2.3 The publishing environment

Like any other industry, a publishing house does not operate in a vacuum, and in any country there are both internal and external factors that influence the workings of the publishing industry. Although this study is more concerned with the external environment in which a publishing industry functions, brief attention is also given to the various internal factors that have a bearing on the publishing industry.

#### 2.3.1 Internal factors

In order to perform their function in the external environment successfully, publishing houses are divided into different departments, each of which represents a subactivity. The following departments are usually found in big publishing houses: editorial, design, production, marketing, accounting and management (Machet 1988: 86).

The prime responsibility of the *editorial* department is to select manuscripts and prepare them for publication. However, this role of editors has been expanded in that editors are today increasingly directly involved in the development of new materials (North 1998, personal communication). The *design* department fulfils an important function in the production of a book, since the designer specifies the physical form of the book, which can be a most important factor influencing the eventual sale of the book. The staff in the *production* department have to see to it that the product is printed and finished as well, quickly and economically as possible. The production department buys composition, paper, printing and binding according to the specifications of the design department. The *marketing* department is directly in touch with the external environment, since this department is responsible for bringing the book to the reader. The functions of the marketing department include personal contact selling, advertising, promotion and publicity (Machet 1988: 86-89).

The *accounting* department is the compiler and source of various kinds of essential information. In short, it can be said that the accounting department performs the traditional accounting function but in the context of the publishing business (Bailey 1970: 47). The publisher is the *manager* of the publishing house and is responsible for all its activities. Since a publishing house must be run as a business, the publisher needs to see to it that good business principles prevail in the company and that good decisions are made regarding which titles to publish (Van Rooyen 1996: 100-103).

From the above discussion it can be deduced that a publishing house is a specialized business, which, like any business, should be run according to sound business principles, and which requires highly skilled and competent staff members in order to function optimally.

Besides the internal workings of a publishing house, there are also external factors that have an influence on the function of a publisher (which are at present particularly evident in the South African context).

### 2.3.2 External factors

The publisher can be regarded as a conduit between authors and readers (Van Rooyen 1996: 103). Because of the wide variety of tastes and interests that exist in the market, publishers often specialize in different fields, such as education, religion, technical publishing, trade, and so on (Machet 1988: 79-85; Van Rooyen 1996: 3-84). Each of these specializations can be regarded, and must regard itself as part of a larger structure. This larger structure has a direct bearing on the publisher in that it determines the function of the publisher within the larger structure. On the other hand, the publisher also influences the development of the larger structure of which it is part. In the words of Bailey (1970: 15):

A strong and creative publishing house can have important long-term effects by encouraging certain authors and certain areas of writing and certain ideas, by finding readers for those authors and gaining acceptance for those ideas.

These words of Bailey illustrate the role of the publisher as an information intermediary (North 1998: 136). Not only do publishers act as gatekeepers of knowledge (Altbach 1987: 11), but they also effect change in a society, thereby contributing to the general development of the society.

Altbach (1987: 5-10) mentions broader social conditions that affect the activities of a publisher. One key factor in this regard is the nature of a country's education system, which is a major consumer of printed materials, especially textbooks. This is particularly true of developing countries. Very often a large part of a publisher's income comes from textbooks. Linked to the education system is the library market, a further major consumer of books. The condition of libraries and other book-buying institutions have a direct influence on the sales of books, especially scholarly publications.

A further key factor that affects book publishing is the rate of literacy in a country. Although illiteracy is a feature of developed and developing countries alike, the problem is more severe in developing countries. In these countries it is also often the case that only a



small minority of the literate population can afford to buy books, which leads to “a vicious circle of restricted publishing” (Altbach 1987: 8), in that limited printings for a small audience leads to high prices, which lead to a small audience. As a result of this type of situation in many developing countries the growth of the publishing industry in those countries has been slow, with negative effects on intellectual life, the education system and other elements of society.

Another factor that has a bearing on the publisher is that of language. While this is seldom a major problem in the developed countries of the West where one language has a dominant position, it is often a key issue in multilingual countries. This problem can be particularly acute in countries made up of a multitude of small linguistic and cultural groups. In the developing countries, a further language issue, namely, that of the use of the language of the former colonizer, has far-reaching implications for various aspects of society, for instance, participation in the educational or political system of a country (Altbach 1987: 9).

As mentioned earlier (cf § 2.3.1), a publishing house is a business that needs to be run according to sound business principles. Thus the social and cultural activities of the publisher take place within the constraints of a business environment. Altbach (1987: 4) also mentions the physical constraints of production and distribution, such as labour and transport costs, the availability of outlets, printing presses and the cost of paper.

From the above discussion it is clear that in any society there is a relationship of mutual responsiveness between the publishing industry and the general social and cultural environment, but within the limits of financial parameters. A further important factor relating to the external environment of the publisher is that of the international context.

#### 2.4 Publishing in the international context

There are a number of factors related to publishing in the international context. While some of these factors are of a more general nature, others are particularly relevant to

developing countries

#### 2.4.1 General issues

When the international publishing context is considered, there are a number of factors that have affected publishers worldwide (Altbach 1987: 13-16). The most serious problem facing publishers is an economic one. Because of increases in the cost of paper, labour, printing ink, and even overheads, the cost-price of books has become higher, which has an effect on the selling price. Scholarly publications and quality paperbacks especially are hard hit by this development. Coupled with this are the economic problems experienced by several Western universities as a result of cutbacks in government subsidies, which result in libraries and university staff cutting down on book purchases. There is furthermore a serious shortage of materials, especially paper, which contributes further to the economic crisis in the publishing industry.

A further factor that creates a problem for publishers is that of the proliferation of books. During the 1960s, when many countries experienced an economic boom (cf. § 2.2), educational systems expanded fast and library budgets increased. This resulted in an increase in the number of titles published. The so-called 'knowledge explosion' has also contributed to the increase in the number of publications available on the market. The fact that the growth in the market for books has slowed down, makes it difficult to sell a wide variety of titles. Related to this aspect is the factor of specialization, which results in more and more scholarly publications on increasingly narrow topics being written for smaller audiences.

Besides the general problems mentioned above, there are particular problems experienced by developing countries that distinguish them from developed countries.

#### 2.4.2 Issues in the developing countries

There are certain problems that pertain to developing countries in particular. Among the

developing countries there are furthermore problems that are specific to Africa, which sets this continent apart from the rest of the developing countries.

#### 2.4.2.1 General issues

A major factor affecting developing countries today is the inequality in the distribution of products of knowledge. The prominent first world nations not only produce most of the knowledge, but they also control the communication of this knowledge to other nations in that they dominate the knowledge distribution systems. Other countries, especially developing countries, remain at the periphery of the international intellectual system (Altbach 1987: xv). This situation has been exacerbated by the inequality in the distribution of the means to handle information, with the North-South information gap looking set to increase (Panos Institute 1996).

The imbalance in the international knowledge system has developed because of a variety of factors, such as historical events, economic factors, the issues of language and literacy, as well as the nature of the education systems in different countries. Furthermore, because of the benefit for themselves the developed countries have at times used their superior position to the disadvantage of developing countries. Another important factor is the fact that developing nations have often not paid sufficient attention to the issues of intellectual productivity and independence, because of the concern with more pressing development problems (Altbach 1987: 33), but also due to an alarming lack of understanding of the value of information today (North 1998, personal communication).

A serious problem experienced by developing countries is that of a major “book hunger” (Barker & Escarpit 1973; Altbach 1987: 18, 1992: 2). Not only do these countries lack enough books, but the books that are published do not necessarily serve national priorities. Africa in particular is experiencing a major twofold crisis: in the first place, there a dearth of sufficient numbers of books in schools and society at large, and secondly there is a dire need for the development of a viable indigenous publishing industry on this continent (Altbach 1992: 1; Zeleza 1996: 33).

There have been some small-scale international efforts to encourage indigenous publishing in the former colonies, but without much success. A number of factors contribute to this situation. While some of these are of a more general nature, there are three major factors that have in particular played a role in this regard: the dominance of transnational companies, the role of local governments and the policies of international aid programmes (Montagnes 1992: 233).

(a) General problems

One problem experienced by developing countries is that of the international copyright system, which favours the 'haves' of the world. If the publishing community in the West should modify their regulations, specifically with regard to educational and scientific materials, it would contribute significantly to the development of some developing countries (Altbach 1992: 7-8; Chakava 1996: 75-94). A second factor relates to the paper needed for book production, which developing countries need to import at great expense from countries such as Canada and Sweden (Altbach 1992: 8; Rathgeber 1992: 85).

A third problem is that of multilingualism, which often makes it very difficult to decide which language to use for publishing purposes. The situation is particularly problematic in countries made up of a large group of linguistic and ethnic minorities, where no single language is dominant (Bgoya 1992: 178-180; Chakava 1996: 29, 97-98; Pacheco 1992: 275-278; Zell 1992a: 72). The issue of textbooks, which is "the largest single element of publishing" (Altbach 1992: 9) in developing countries, also needs serious attention. There is a clear need for educators, governments and publishers to develop feasible strategies to improve the supply of textbooks in developing countries (Chakava 1996: 17-19; Nkwankwo 1992: 154; Pacheco 1992: 275).

Developing countries also have particular problems regarding book distribution because of low-income populations, who either do not have the means to buy books or do not have access to bookstores (Altbach 1992: 11), or because booksellers are generally not

informed by publishers of new publications (Rathgeber 1992: 84-85). In the developing countries there is furthermore an imbalance between imports and exports, with developing countries importing most of their books from the industrialized countries and exporting very little, not only to the first world, but also to other developing countries (Altbach 1992: 12-13; Rathgeber 1992: 78-79). The founding in 1990 of African Books Collective (ABC) by a group of African publishers, has been a “major breakthrough” (Chakava 1996: 42) in the distribution of African published books to America and Western Europe, though there is still much that can be improved (Zell 1992b: 111-115).

Another issue relates to the development of new technologies, which “have created as many problems as they have solved” (Altbach 1992: 13), in that they are based on the needs of the West and do not necessarily cater for the problems of the developing countries (Nicholls & Majid 1989: 262). A last important factor is that of the role of the private and public sectors in publishing. While publishing in the first world is largely in the hands of private enterprise, the tendency in the developing countries has been to have strong state involvement in the publishing industry, a state of affairs that has not always yielded positive results (Altbach 1992: 10; Buchan 1992: 351-352; Gedin 1992: 47-48; Read 1992: 313).

(b) Transnational companies

In many developing countries the commercial arrangements built up over years of colonial rule persisted for long after independence. Branches of British and French publishers continued to operate in these countries, to a large extent dominating the publishing scene. Through their publishing policies they also inhibited the development of a flourishing indigenous publishing industry. Because of their considerable size and power they still attract a large part of the market for books, and may also attract the best writers through their international connections (Montagnes 1992: 232).

However, as Zell (1992a: 67) points out, there is enough evidence that transnationals are now involved in the publishing of African-oriented books, created and published by

Africans, in Africa. Furthermore, the creation of a publishing industry and a reading public in most former colonies can in fact directly be ascribed to the establishment of transnational companies in those countries. Graham (1992: 32) points out the positive influence that transnational companies had in some countries in South America and Asia, so much so that Brazil, for instance, is now a bigger publisher in Portuguese than Portugal.

(c) Governments

Because the state has such a widespread influence in society in many developing countries, governments have also played a substantial role in publishing, mostly to the detriment of indigenous publishers (Montagnes 1992: 235-236). For instance, high tariffs are often imposed on imported paper, while there are protected high prices on locally produced paper. Furthermore, imported books are subject to high tariffs, while the export of books is often made extremely difficult because of bureaucratic red tape. Censorship is also not uncommon (Altbach 1992: 15-16; Chakava 1996: 157-161).

When governments become involved in publishing their detrimental influence on the industry becomes even stronger. In a number of countries in Africa the development, writing and publication of textbooks in particular came under a ministry or other government agency after independence. Not only was an area of publishing that is stable and potentially profitable taken away from private enterprise, but the quality of textbooks also often deteriorated (Altbach 1992: 10; Buchan 1992: 351-352; Chakava 1996: 14; Gedin 1992: 47-48; Read 1992: 313). According to Chakava (1996: 155) the problems created by governments, especially in Africa, can be ascribed to the fact that they adopted “bad or misinformed” policies 30 years ago at independence and have not revised them since. In general, there seems to be very little understanding in developing countries of the value of indigenous information, hence the lack of government support for developing an indigenous publishing industry.

(d) Aid programmes

Book aid programmes have often been detrimental to the local publishing industry because they were poorly conceived and were subject to conditions that inhibited the development of the local publishing industry (Montagnes 1992: 236; Zell 1992a: 68-71). However, as Read (1992: 323) points out, recognition of the mistakes made in the past has led to a more holistic approach by, for instance, the World Bank, to the whole issue of book provision. Also, attention is being given to the promotion of publishing activities in the recipient countries (e.g. Buchan 1992: 362-263), although much more needs to be done to ensure that sustainable development takes place in the publishing industries of these countries (Minowa 1992: 55-62).

From the above discussion it is clear that indigenous publishers in the developing countries are at a great disadvantage when compared to publishers in the developed world. However, it should be mentioned that although the developing countries are often lumped together in one group, not everything that is applicable to one country or region is necessarily applicable to all. For instance, Asia is generally speaking in a much better position than Africa, with a number of east Asian newly industrialised countries (NICs) such as Singapore, Korea and Taiwan having flourishing local publishing industries (Altbach 1992: 19-21). Even in poor countries such as China and India publishing has developed impressively, in contrast with Africa where “significant broader political and economic factors” (Altbach 1992: 21) have inhibited similar growth. Because of the particularly serious problems experienced in Africa, the African situation is discussed separately in the next section.

2.4.2.2 The African situation

Besides the general problems that developing countries face, specifically the lack of understanding of the value of information, there are a few more problems that have contributed to the deterioration of the publishing industry over the past two decades in Africa. Four major issues are those of the economic crisis of the 1980s, the problem of

multilingualism, the lack of regional cooperation, and the scarcity of infrastructures (Altbach 1992: 17-19).

(a) The economic crisis

The economic crisis of the 1980s has affected all aspects of African society, especially those segments of the economy that are dependent on imports, such as book publishing. A number of factors have contributed to the particularly severe impact left on Africa, namely, the international debt crisis, low prices on the world market for African exports, political instability, overpopulation, and mismanagement. The economic crisis has affected all elements of publishing in Africa: restricted government spending on education has an influence on the publication and sales of textbooks; restrictions on imports make paper and other materials needed very expensive and often unavailable; and the inability to import books and journals effectively deprives universities from access to the world's knowledge, a situation which can only be to the detriment of the continent as a whole. The economic crisis in Africa is at the root of most other problems experienced in this part of the world, and unless the basic economic situation improves, no other industry, including publishing, is likely to show any development (Altbach 1992: 17; Rathgeber 1992: 77; Zell 1992a: 66) .

(b) Language issues

Language issues pose a handicap to publishing in indigenous African languages. English and French continue to dominate the language scene, not only because of the heritage of colonialism, but also because these languages are world languages, the languages of international research and scientific knowledge. However, there is the added problem in many countries of a large number of dialects, each spoken by only a small group. Furthermore, with the exception of Swahili and some of the languages of Southern Africa, very few African languages have standardized orthographies, a factor which makes publishing in an indigenous language very difficult. The fact that many developing countries use a European language as the main or only language of education creates a



need for textbooks in these languages, and also results in these languages remaining the “keys to social mobility and participation” (Altbach 1992:18) in the progressive sectors of all African societies. It is evident that there is no ready solution to Africa’s language dilemma, a matter that affects publishing directly (Altbach 1992: 17-18; Bgoya 1992: 178-180; Chakava 1996: 29, 97-98; Zell 1992a: 72)

(c) Lack of regional cooperation

The lack of regional cooperation in publishing in Africa, which to an extent parallels the lack of communication networks in operation between the different developing countries of the world (e.g. Nicholls & Majid 1989; Bar 1992), is a further deterrent to the growth of publishing on this continent. In Africa there are many small linguistic and tribal groupings that make not only nation building but also book publishing very difficult. There is also a major linguistic division between Francophone and Anglophone areas, which transcends national boundaries. This situation makes regional cooperation both logical and desirable, with West Africa working together on the basis of English or French and East Africa on the basis of Swahili or English. However, efforts in this regard have been unsuccessful (Altbach 1992: 19).

(d) Scarcity of infrastructures

At the time of independence, most African countries had only a few publishing resources, and books were mostly imported. The situation has not improved markedly since then. Paper is mostly imported and printing facilities are outdated and inadequate. The distribution network is underdeveloped and almost non-existent outside of the larger cities. Furthermore, the few booksellers that do exist tend to concentrate on the importing of Western books, which are more readily available and bring in a higher profit. There are very few trained publishers, and the present economic climate makes the importing of materials and technology needed to build up the needed infrastructures virtually impossible (Altbach 1992: 18).

However, despite these circumstances, some publishers in Kenya have been successful, while publishing in Zimbabwe has progressed. There has also been “a significant development of indigenous and critical publishing in South Africa” (Altbach 1992:19). Since the international conference on publishing issues in the Third World, in Bellagio, Italy in February 1991, the rest of the publishing world has become more aware of the particular problems of African publishers. This has *inter alia* led to the establishing of the African Publishers’ Network (APNET) by 11 African countries in 1992. Today APNET has members from more than 20 countries, representing over 1 000 publishers (Chakava 1996: 178). The APNET newsletter, *African Publishing Review*, has already contributed to the development of a database of addresses and information not available before, and has already created an awareness among individuals and organizations of each other’s experiences (Chakava 1996: 180).

Zezeza (1996: 36) also mentions the work done by the African Books Collective (ABC), and the positive contribution of *The Southern African Review of Books* and *The Zimbabwe Review of Books*, as well as the British-based *The African Book Publishing Record*.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Publishing is no easy matter and there are various factors, both internal and external, that affect this industry. When publishing is placed within a global context a clear division between the developed and the developing nations emerge. While all publishers are experiencing problems, the situation is more severe in the developing countries. However, within the developing world, the African continent is experiencing particularly serious problems.

In the next chapter the South African publishing industry is discussed in more detail. A historical overview of publishing in South Africa is given before the major problems experienced up until the early 1990s are discussed. Some attention is also given to key issues that have emerged since the change in the political dispensation.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

#### 3.0 Synopsis

In this chapter the South African publishing industry is discussed in more detail. A historical overview of the commercial sector is given, before some of the problems experienced up until the early 1990s as well as the key issues that have evolved since the new dispensation are discussed.

#### 3.1 Introduction

The role of the publisher is of particular importance at present in South Africa, which is undergoing many changes as a result of its recent democratization. The focus in this study is on the South African publishing industry, specifically with regard to the role that the publisher can play as an information intermediary in the development of South African society into an information society. Given the history of South Africa, with its colonial and apartheid policies, it goes without saying that politics has influenced and will continue to influence publishing in this African country.

#### 3.2 The South African publishing industry

The South African publishing industry as a whole comprises four major sectors, namely, the commercial sector, the NGO publishing sector, the business publishing sector, and the central and local government publishing sector. The commercial publishing sector is the biggest of the four publishing sectors and comprises educational publishers, academic and tertiary publishers, and general and trade publishers (Czerniewicz 1994: 7). Since the commercial sector is the main focus of this study, no further mention is made of any sector other than the commercial sector, and the term 'South African publishing industry' is therefore used to refer to the commercial sector specifically.

Because of the history of different political dispensations in South Africa, each with its own particular influence on the publishing industry, this industry can at present best be discussed in terms of the history of publishing up until 1994, the situation prevalent in 1994, and the situation since 1994.

### 3.2.1 The history of publishing in South Africa

According to Machet (1993a: 166), the factors of literary colonialism and cultural hegemony contributed to the creation of a publishing industry effectively controlled by white expertise and capital that published books of a mostly Eurocentric nature. While the nature of the publishing industry in the past was directly influenced by the political dispensation of the day, the problems experienced were typical of those experienced in the rest of Africa, albeit on a much smaller scale.

#### 3.2.1.1 Overview

Like in other countries in Africa, publishing was brought to South Africa by the colonizers. During the time of colonial rule missionary presses played a major role in publishing religious and educational texts in the indigenous African languages, which were reduced to writing during the early 19th century. The missionaries used publishing to provide a literature for the newly created literate community. Besides religious and educational texts they also published adult fiction, serious literature, newspapers and magazines (Machet 1993a: 166-167).

During the period of colonial rule, books aimed at white readers were imported and distributed by branches and subsidiaries of overseas publishers. In 1854 Jan Carel Juta started the first fully-fledged South African publishing house, followed in 1893 by Thomas Maskew Miller. After the Anglo-Boer war and the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, Afrikaner nationalism was focused on getting rid of English hegemony in the cultural, political and economic sectors. In 1914 Afrikaners with farming interests in the Western Cape started *Nasionale Pers*, which reflected Afrikaner interests.

However, by the beginning of the 20th century the publishing industry in South Africa was still dominated by British publishers such as Oxford University Press and Longmans (Machet 1993a: 168).

After 1948 the Afrikaner Nationalists emerged as the dominant political force in the country, which also had far-reaching consequences for the publishing industry in South Africa. Publishing in the African languages took off, but publishing in these languages was dominated by the prescription committees of the department of education for historically black schools, which was controlled by white Afrikaners. The Afrikaans publishers, Nasionale Pers and Perskor, flourished in the 1950s, Nasionale Pers having been the most successful publisher from this period until today. In 1993 Nasionale Pers included the full affiliate companies Tafelberg, Nasou, Via Afrika, Human & Rousseau, Academica and Van Schaiks with a controlling interest in Nasionale Media Bpk (Machet 1993a: 168).

The English publishers, such as Oxford University Press, Heinemann, Macmillan, McGraw-Hill, Butterworths and Collins survived by acting as agents for their parent companies as well as entering the Afrikaans-dominated educational market. Much of the publishing for this market was of poor quality (McCallum 1996: 59), but some good academic and general works also saw the light (Machet 1993a: 168).

During the 1960s very few works of African writers were published, but the publication of Afrikaner and white liberal opinion grew rapidly. The then independent publishing houses, Human & Rousseau and Tafelberg, showed “signs of dissent” (Breytenbach 1994: 22), and published works of the Sestigers. English liberal writers, like Nadine Gordimer, were published overseas (Machet 1993a: 168).

The 1970s saw a rise in African oral poetry, which was in part a reaction to white hegemony. In 1970 the Black Consciousness Movement’s *SASO Newsletter* was published, which proved to be a turning point for black writers. For the next 10 to 15 years more community papers, as well as more conventional papers were published, although the successive states of emergency had a severe impact on them. It was also

during the early 1970s that so-called 'alternative' publishers like David Philip (1971), Ravan Press (1972) and Ad Donker (1973) were established (Machet 1993a: 169). Another alternative publisher, Skotaville Publishers, was started in 1982 by Mothobi Mutloatse, who hived off from Ravan. In 1988 Dinah Lefakane left Skotaville to found Seriti sa Sechaba, the first publishing house to be run by an African woman (Philip 1991: 15). Martin (1994: 27) points out that during the 1970s and the 1980s the alternative publishing houses made major contributions to South African publishing, contributing to a spirit of opposition to apartheid.

In November 1989 the alternative publishers, including some non-government organizations (NGOs), came together to form the Independent Publishers Association of South Africa (IPASA). The other three professional organizations representing publishing were the South African Publisher's Association (SAPA), comprising publishers whose main business comes from local publishing; the Independent Book Distributors Association (IBDA), previously called the Overseas Publishers Representative Association; and the Associated Booksellers of South Africa (ABSA). They all subscribed to an umbrella body, namely, the Book Trade Association (BTA) (Machet 1993a: 169).

After 2 February 1990, the date on which the then State President, F W de Klerk, made his now famous opening speech in Parliament, dramatic political changes started taking place in the country. These changes immediately had an impact on the publishing industry. For instance, because the major reason for the existence of the alternative publishers was removed, these publishers had to change from being oppositional publishers to becoming independent smaller publishers competing with the rest of the publishing fraternity for an already small market (Philip 1991: 16). In keeping with a new spirit of union and nation-building, the three trade associations, namely, SAPA, IBDA and IPASA amalgamated into one major trade association, the Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) in 1992 (Van Rooyen 1996: 233).

### 3.2.1.2 Problem areas

The South African publishing industry experienced a variety of problems in the past, like the rest of Africa. Many of these problems are still relevant today and include multilingualism, a small market, competition from foreign publishers, a lack of proper book distribution channels, censorship, Eurocentrism, and the unequal distribution of library facilities (Machet 1993a; Van Rooyen 1996).

#### (a) Multilingualism

A major issue for South African publishers was whether to publish in English, an international language and practically the *lingua franca* of South Africa, or in any of the indigenous languages. Because of the status enjoyed by English it seemed more viable for South African publishers to publish in English. Furthermore, the multiplicity of languages in South Africa reduces the market for books produced in any one language.

#### (b) A small market

The book-buying market in South Africa was estimated at 5% of the population in 1991 (Kantey 1991: 103). This low figure can be explained by the high illiteracy rate in the country, the poverty of the majority of people and the absence of a large “stable middle class” (Van Rooyen 1996: 36). Another possible factor is the strong narrative oral tradition among preliterate blacks that promotes a communal spirit and is in contradiction with a literate tradition, reading being a private, solitary and even anti-social activity (Machet 1993a: 170; Odaga 1997: 10).

#### (c) Competition from foreign publishers

As in other African countries, South African publishers have had to compete with large overseas publishers who can often publish better quality books at lower prices than their South African counterparts. Although English authors in South Africa often send their

manuscripts overseas, the publishers there do not easily accept manuscripts that are too African in content. Locally based multinationals also tend to avoid books that are too particular to a given culture. These factors inhibited the development of an indigenous literature in South Africa in the past. Furthermore, currency fluctuations and the reduction of market sectors with a potential for growth also had a negative impact on the publishing industry (Machet 1993a: 171).

(d) Book distribution

An effective book distribution chain is a key factor affecting the profitability of a publisher. Although South Africa has always been in a far better position than most African countries in this regard, book stores have been inadequate both in quality and quantity. With regard to the general market, the CNA Gallo Group, which in 1993 was reported to be handling the bulk of trade sales in this category catered primarily for the white market. This situation made distribution the most serious problem confronting small publishers. Attempts to reach the black market were not always successful and also posed a financial risk to the publisher (Machet 1993a: 171-172).

(e) Censorship

For many years the South African censorship system controlled the publishing industry in this country (Philip 1991; Machet 1993: 172-172). Censorship laws, especially during the state of emergency, restricted the dissemination of information, which had an adverse effect on publishing. One of the negative effects in this regard was that the press and publishers exercised self-censorship in order to avoid bans. In this way the number, type and quality of locally published books were adversely affected. The strict censorship laws also helped create a climate of censorship in libraries, which had a negative effect on book publishers in South Africa. Naturally the situation changed dramatically after 2 February 1990. However, it will still take considerable time before the negative effects of forty years of censorship on writers, publishers and libraries can be neutralized by the new, more tolerant attitudes (Machet 1993a: 172-173.)



(f) Eurocentrism

The majority of books available on the South African market in the past were Eurocentric in nature, encouraged cultural dependency and prevented the development of an indigenous African written culture. Furthermore, children's books reflected mostly European socio-cultural values, which could be a reason why so few black children read for pleasure (Machet 1993: 173; cf. also Samuel 1993: 16).

(g) Libraries

There has been a grossly uneven distribution of library facilities in South Africa. Whereas there have been adequate library facilities in white areas, the facilities in black areas have been totally insufficient (Machet 1993: 173-174; cf. also Samuel 1993: 16). However, as Machet (1993: 174) points out, one of the major reasons for the lack of parity in the provision of libraries between black and white communities is that African people are generally not readers, since their culture is basically an oral one.

In conclusion one could say that South African publishing in the past experienced problems similar to those experienced by other African countries. But, in contrast to most other African countries, indigenous publishing in South Africa flourished despite these problems. This can to a large extent be ascribed to the relationship between the Afrikaans companies and the Nationalist government in the past. However, after 2 February 1990, the political situation started changing dramatically, culminating in the first democratic elections on 27 April 1994, a watershed in the political history of South Africa. Many changes were due to follow after April 1994, not least so in the publishing industry. It is therefore worthwhile to look briefly at the situation in the publishing industry in 1994 as well as the key issues identified to play a role in the future of this industry under a new dispensation.

### 3.2.2 The situation in 1994

Although the new political dispensation officially came into being on 27 April 1994, political changes had already started taking place in South Africa shortly after 2 February 1990. To anyone who had the slightest political insight it was clear that the end of Afrikaner Nationalist rule was in sight, and the public and private sectors alike began preparing themselves for the new dispensation.

#### 3.2.2.1 Background

Just prior to and during 1994 some 'stock taking' took place in the publishing industry, which resulted in at least three very worthwhile and educational publications: *Publishing for democratic education* (Kromberg 1993), a compilation of papers from a Sached/NECC conference, which focuses on educational publishing; *Training for a change* (Czerniewicz 1994), a report commissioned by PASA and the African Literature Department of the University of the Witwatersrand on the issue of pre-service training for South African publishing; and *How to get published in South Africa* (Van Rooyen 1994), which is mainly a guide for prospective authors. All three publications provide valuable information regarding the position of the publishing industry just before and during 1994.

A characteristic feature of the publishing industry in 1994 was the repositioning and reorganization that was taking place. This can be ascribed to the blurring of previously historical divisions, so that mainstream publishers were now becoming involved in what had previously been the domain of the alternative publishers, and *vice versa* (Czerniewicz 1994: 6; Martin 1994: 29).

In 1994 the South African publishing industry was described as the biggest and most sophisticated publishing industry in Africa (Czerniewicz 1994: 7), with a retail value of approximately R1,2 billion (Van Rooyen 1994: 4). The number of book publishers were estimated to be between 115 and 128, of which 71 belonged to publishing associations in 1994. Educational publishing, which mainly entailed textbook publishing for the school

system, constituted 75-80% of publishing in South Africa, with 80% of this market being served by three major publishers, namely, Naspers, Perskor and Haum-De Jager. Of the publishing that took place in South Africa, 78% was in English and Afrikaans, and the rest in various African languages (Czerniewicz 1994: 7).

Although the picture painted of the South African industry was rather positive, there were also a number of factors that posed a threat to publishers at the time. Two factors that are particularly relevant for this study are those of the slow pace of political transition and the resultant uncertainty affecting publishers' viability, and the possibility of state involvement in educational publishing, thereby undermining the industry (Czerniewicz 1994: 8).

On the negative side it could be said that there had been a great deal of corruption in the largest sector of the industry, namely educational publishing (Moss 1993: 29; Proctor & Monteith 1993: 31; McCallum 1994: 36). Because educational publishing had been equated with textbook publishing, the development of a wider reading culture had been hampered, and general publishing constrained (Moss 1993: 22; Czerniewicz 1994: 7). Many books, specifically textbooks, had been criticized as being inappropriate (Proctor & Monteith 1993: 31; Czerniewicz 1994: 8), both in terms of content (Machet 1993: 117) and in terms of readability, especially with regard to ESL speakers (Macdonald 1990a: 173; Van Rooyen 1990; Potenza 1993: 48; Pretorius 1993: 197). Furthermore, publishing in the African languages had been largely restricted to prescription publishing (Machet 1993: 169; Czerniewicz 1994: 8).

Nevertheless, in 1994 the industry was described as having the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and to meet the changing demands of the times. Some key issues were identified that were regarded as certain to influence the future of publishing in South Africa (Czerniewicz 1994: 8-12).

#### 3.2.2.2 Key issues

Czerniewicz (1994: 12) identified 13 key issues that were perceived to be issues of

importance for the publishing industry on the eve of the new political dispensation in South Africa. Reinterpreting these issues to fit into the framework of this study, they are divided into two major groups, relating to the developmental role of the publisher on the one hand and the facilitating role of the government/state on the other.

(a) Development

This study argues that in any society the publisher plays a crucial role in development, not only of society, but also of the local publishing industry. The publishing industry in this way becomes not only the vehicle but also the product of development. The issues relating to development are divided into general development issues and issues relating to the industry specifically.

(i) General development issues

Perhaps the most important matter regarding development in any society is that of education. In a multilingual society a second most important matter is that of language. Given the history of South Africa, with the inequities among different education departments and the difference in status of the indigenous languages, these matters become particularly pertinent in a new political dispensation (e.g. CSIR 1996: 1; DE 1995: Ch. 3, Ch. 7, § 32-40; LANGTAG 1996a: 14). It is therefore not surprising that both education and language issues featured strongly as issues set to have an influence on the publishing industry in the 'new' South Africa.

*Education issues*

At the beginning of 1994 it was clear that a great deal of restructuring in terms of new regions was going to take place, which would have an influence on the education system (Czerniewicz 1994: 12). Furthermore, the amalgamation of 17 previous departments of education into one central department of education would have a direct impact on the whole of the publishing industry. In the first place, there was pressure for a new system of

textbook selection and provision, as well as continued uncertainty as to how this system would work. Secondly, there was a need for new books, both educational and general, which reflected the realities and the values of a new South African society (e.g. McCallum 1994a: 37; Masokoane 1993: 65), and would be accessible to English Second Language (ESL) students (Potenza 1993: 48). A further issue was the role of publishers in curriculum development and the trialing of materials (McCallum 1995: 127).

### *Language issues*

In the light of the new language policy that gave official status to the nine major indigenous African languages, it was presumed that there would be a rise in publishing in the indigenous languages. There was also a strong awareness of the implications for textbook publishing of a new language policy in education (McCallum 1995). In the first place, textbook planning and development looked set to become a far more complex business, because of the need for language support or applied linguistic input in some form or another (Macdonald 1990b: 107; Van Rooyen 1990: 106; Pretorius 1993: 197; Potenza 1993: 58). Secondly, educational material was likely to become much more expensive, given the realities of an envisioned fragmented market resulting in lower print runs and higher unit costs, which lead to higher retail prices of books (McCallum 1995: 135).

#### (ii) Development of the industry

There are a number of issues that relate directly or indirectly to the development of the publishing industry as such, namely transformation, research on publishing, book distribution, and cooperation in Africa.

### *Transformation*

Prior to 1994 the publishing industry had already begun to transform itself in preparation of the then imminent new political dispensation. However, this transformation seemed to

have been somewhat superficial (Moss 1993: 29), and Czerniewicz (1994: 6) pointed out the need for a far-reaching transformation within the publishing industry. This could be brought about by new publishers with the necessary background and insight who would be able to play a constructive role in creating a publishing industry that met the needs of a new transitional society (Czerniewicz 1994: 13).

In 1994 there was clearly a need for both in-house and pre-service training (Cachalia 1993: 157; Samuel 1993: 13-14) in the whole publishing industry, given the overall shortage of trained staff. Furthermore, there was a need for affirmative action as an integral part of a human resource development strategy for the industry as a whole, in order to make the industry more representative of the South African population (Cachalia 1993: 158-159; Czerniewicz 1994: 12).

### *Research on publishing*

At the time when there was a growing awareness of the future role of publishers in the new dispensation in South Africa, it also became apparent that there was no reliable body of knowledge on publishing and publishing-related issues, because of a lack of sustained and systematic research in this regard (Czerniewicz 1994: 12). Besides the reports commissioned by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI 1993), and the compilation of papers that emerged from the Sached/NECC conference on Publishing for Democratic Education, there was no ongoing research in this field. This was a sad situation since objective research could have provided a valuable basis for strategic planning and policy formulation by companies, publishers' associations and state departments (Czerniewicz 1994: 15).

### *Book distribution*

One of the major problems, if not the major problem, that had faced South African publishers in the past had been that of book distribution (e.g. Machet 1993a: 171-172). In 1994 this situation had not changed yet. The CNA/Gallo group was still dominating the

retail distribution of general books through the hundreds of CNA outlets, but also the more up-market Exclusive Books outlets. The other major distributor of general books was Leserskring/Leisure Books Book Club of the Nasionale Pers group. Regarding educational publications, most distribution was done through bookshops run by publishers or representatives of publishing houses. In some cases education departments purchased directly from the publishers (Van Rooyen 1994: 6), a situation which in the past had inhibited the development of smaller independent booksellers (Machet 1993a: 171). There was therefore still a strong need to develop more effective book distribution networks. In fact, according to Van Rooyen (1994: 6) this was the “great challenge” facing the publishing industry in 1994.

### *Cooperation in Africa*

One of the immediate effects of the change in the political structures in South Africa was that this country was welcomed back into the publishing world. For instance, in 1994 South Africa had already been invited to join APNET (cf. § 2.4.2.2). Because of its good infrastructure and financial strength compared to the rest of Africa, the South African publishing industry looked set to make a contribution to the development of the African publishing industry, which was lagging far behind the rest of the developing world. At the same time it was acknowledged that South African publishers could benefit from the experiences of other African publishers (Czerniewicz 1994: 54-55).

So far the discussion has been from the viewpoint of the publishing industry. In the next section some attention is given to the viewpoint of the government.

#### (b) The role of the government

Czerniewicz (1994: 12) mentions a lack of clarity on the future role of the state regarding publishing and the impact of the emerging education policy framework on the publishing industry as key issues influencing the future of publishing in South Africa. However, the paper delivered at the Sached/NECC conference in 1993 by John Samuel of the African

National Congress (ANC) gives some indication of what could be expected in the new dispensation.

Samuel (1993: 13) places the issue of educational publishing within the context of “broader issues of development”, which is very much in line with the view taken in this study. His view stems not only from the fact that education is a major factor in the development of any country, but also from the fact that the ANC regards the participation of citizens in decision-making, growth and reconstruction as fundamental to the process of development, which constitutes empowerment of the people.

According to Samuel, the ANC would not attempt to control the publishing industry. However, in his own words (Samuel 1993: 10):

the new government has the responsibility of ensuring that the inequities of the past are eradicated and that adequate provision is made for new learning resources. The extent to which a new government intervenes in shaping the course of educational publishing therefore depends on the extent to which publishers commit themselves visibly to the development of a local publishing industry which fosters indigenous thought, democracy and educational development; and which reflects the composition, needs and concerns of all of South Africa’s people. In the absence of rapid progress on this front, the government will have no option but to become involved in resource provision itself so as to rectify the past imbalances in education.

Samuel’s statement suggests ANC’s intention to radically change education in South Africa and to force educational publishers to transform. Furthermore, publishers are warned of the possibility of state intervention in the industry, despite the acknowledgement that state publishing had been “singularly unsuccessful” (Samuel 1993: 10) in the rest of Africa.

He stresses the importance of the availability and quality of books and mentions the commitment of the ANC “to achieving a situation in which each child has access to at least one book per subject” (Samuel 1993: 14). In what could once again be regarded as a



warning to educational publishers he states that in order to achieve this the publishing industry would have to “align itself with the key concerns and priorities of a new ministry of education and training” (Samuel 1993: 14). Furthermore, the material that is published should not only assist the short-term transition, but should also lay the foundations for longer term change, which according to him translates into the publishing of a wide variety of material in all the South African languages.

From the above it is clear that the new government recognized the role of the publishing industry in development, specifically also with regard to education and language matters.

Regarding the development of the industry itself, Samuel (1993: 13) views the reshaping of the industry as a major factor in the future of educational publishing in South Africa. He points out the need for the development and training of black authors, editors and production and managerial staff so that the industry becomes representative of the South African population as a whole (cf. also Cachalia 1993). Concerning the issue of ownership he mentions that although South Africa has a strong locally-owned publishing industry, this is largely due to the privileged relationship that some of these publishers enjoyed with the Nationalist government in the past. In what can be regarded as a warning to some of these publishers he states that a new government would “need to ensure that the industry develops in ways which do not depend on such privilege, and which foster the opportunity for increased ownership among black South Africans in particular” (Samuel 1993: 14).

Samuel (1993: 15-19) also spells out the role of a new government in creating an environment conducive for publishing in the new South Africa, mentioning the following important factors in this regard: the formulation of a book development policy, the need to generate a reading culture, the government’s relationship with educational publishers, the need to draw on the expertise of anti-apartheid publishers, and the need to create an “enabling environment” (Samuel 1993: 18) for educational publishing. Although the ideas and proposals mentioned by Samuel did “not yet constitute formal ANC policy” (Samuel 1993: 10) in 1993, they are a clear indication of what the new government perceived its

role to be with regard to publishing activities in a new dispensation.

It could therefore be stated that in 1994 both the publishing industry and the new government recognized the important role of (educational) publishers in the development of South African society, particularly with regard to education and language matters. Furthermore, there was an awareness of the importance of a relationship of cooperation between publishers and the government in order to ensure that publishers could go about their business unhindered. However, it was already clear that the new government would be prepared to intervene in the process should they feel the need to do so.

### 3.2.3 Publishing in South Africa since 1994

The period since April 1994 has been characterized to a large extent by the slow pace of transformation in all spheres of South African society. In the educational arena especially, the process of reorganizing and restructuring has been particularly slow, so much so that the implementation of the new curriculum for education has been severely delayed (e.g. Altenroxel 1998a; Prabhakaran 1998; Reeves 1998). Furthermore, there are clear signs that the administration of both the central and the provincial education departments leave much to be desired (e.g. Duffy 1997). Progress in the implementation of language policy has also been virtually non-existent.

The slow progress in the implementation of Curriculum 2005 has had a detrimental influence on the publishing industry, given the direct relationship between the implementation of education and language policy and educational publishing. Because of the dependence of the publishing industry as a whole on educational publishing, a collapse in this area could cause the downfall of the whole industry. This would have a severe impact on the role of the publisher in development, which would ultimately have a disastrous impact on the development of the whole South African society as the children of South Africa will be denied a proper education. Since a detailed discussion of the present situation in the publishing industry is given in Chapter 5, this issue does not receive any further attention here.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Compared to the rest of Africa, the South African publishing industry is a flourishing industry. However, it still experiences many problems, some of which can be related to its colonial past and the heritage of apartheid. Since the new political climate began to develop in the early 1990s, and since 1994 in particular, many changes have been taking place that have a direct impact on the publishing industry in this country. These changes have brought about specific key issues that have an influence on the future of the South African publishing industry, specifically with regard to the role of the publisher as a facilitator of development.

The issue of development is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, within the context of the information age. Particular attention is given to the role of the publisher in bringing about development within a society. Besides a general discussion the South African situation is also dealt with in more detail, focusing on the new education system and the new language policies.

## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPMENT: THE PROCESS OF INFORMATIZATION

#### 4.0 Synopsis

This chapter deals, broadly speaking, with the notion of development as a process of informatization. It is argued that development hangs closely together with the process of becoming an information society. The role of the publisher in bringing about development in a society is discussed before attention is given to the situation in South Africa. The new education system and the new language policy for education are discussed as two important factors in the development of South African society.

#### 4.1 Introduction

The issue of development is in many respects a contentious issue and has in the past been approached from a variety of (mainly Western) perspectives. Although this study does not attempt to move away from a Western perspective, it does attempt to focus on other matters than economic factors, which are often the focus of development theories. In the present study the focus is very much on the relationship between information and development, and it is argued that in the information age it is crucially important for people to be able to handle information adequately in order to survive and flourish in their environment.

#### 4.2 The issue of development

The concept of development is difficult to define, and various definitions abound. Most of the theories that have been developed to explain the difference between the haves and the have-nots of the world have a strong economic flavour. The first major theory was the *stages of growth* theory developed by Rostow in the 1960s. Soon after this the theory of *structural change* (Dordick & Wang 1993: 17) or *modernization* (Cooper 1996: 231)

was developed. The 1970s saw the development of the *dependency* model, while the model of the *free market system* emerged in the 1980s (cf. Dordick & Wang 1993: 16-19 for a more detailed discussion). These theories of development approach the issue from a mainly Western perspective, even though researchers may stress the importance of considering the cultures and customs of the so-called developing societies (Mowlana & Wilson 1990: 128). This suggests a need for a ‘new’ definition of development, appropriate for developing societies.

North (1998: 62) suggests a “context-sensitive” definition of development, which would eliminate the possibility of a paternalistic approach and the measuring of the level of development of a society by means of Western or other inappropriate criteria. According to her, the criterion should be whether an individual or a society survives and flourishes within its particular context, which in the information age entails an information-rich environment.

In the information age the survival and flourishing of a society or an individual are directly related to the ability to acquire and utilize information. This view is shared by a number of authors, who believe that the use of information is required for coping with everyday needs and surviving in any society (e.g. Fairer-Wessels 1990; September 1993; Zaiman & Roux 1989). In line with this perspective, and departing from an essentially Western point of view, North (1998: 62) proposes the following definition of development. This is also the definition adhered to in this study.

Development is the reaction of an organism on the environment with a view to survive and thrive. Sustainable development is *inter alia* determined (and measured) by:  
the attitude of the organism towards information;  
knowledge of relevant information sources and systems; and  
skills for the retrieval and utilization of information with a view to innovative problem solving and creative thinking, and to package the result (new information) in such a manner that it can serve as further input to the development of individuals and societies [author’s translation].

North uses the term ‘organism’ as a generic term to refer to an individual, a group of individuals, a team in an organization, an enterprise or institution, or a society. From the basis of the above definition it can be argued that a developed society is a society whose members have the required attitude, knowledge and skills regarding information to survive and flourish in the information age, in other words, they are information literate.

Applying the view of Edvinsson & Malone (1997) to the concept of society in general, it could be argued that information literate people contribute to the enhancement of the human capital of a society, which together with the structural capital, form the intellectual capital of a society, intellectual capital referring to the “hidden dynamic factors that underlie the visible [society]” (Edvinsson & Malone 1997: 11). It follows therefore that the human capital of a society that could contribute to the intellectual capital of that society needs to be as large as possible in order to enhance the ultimate intellectual capital of the society.

The *attitudes* required for information literacy include a general awareness of the importance and value of information for everyday existence, an openness and flexibility towards information and information sources and systems, and emotional stability regarding the potentially problematic aspects of information in an information society (Marais 1994: 15; North 1998: 55). *Knowledge* refers to knowledge of the nature of information, as well as information sources and services (Marais 1994: 16; North 1998: 54). According to North (1998: 54), the knowledge component cannot be divorced from the skills component, and it is often very difficult to distinguish between them. *Skills* refer to skills in obtaining, processing and utilizing information, as well as critical thinking skills (Marais 1994: 16; North 1998: 52-54).

The attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to survive in the information age can be taught by means of information education (Marais 1994; North 1998: 51-62) or information literacy programmes (Sayed & De Jager 1997: 6). The ultimate aim of information education is to cultivate lifelong learners, who have a creative, problem-solving approach to their environment, and who are able to generate new knowledge for use by others, so

that sustainable development can be brought about in their society.

In the light of the above discussion and the earlier discussion of the information society and the process of informatization (cf. § 1.4.2), it can be argued that a developed society is an information society, while a developing society is a society moving towards becoming an information society, that is, a society undergoing the process of informatization. In keeping with other views on the process of informatization, the perspective mentioned here underscores the view that informatization brings about qualitative change in human society (Braman 1997: 8-9).

Although North (1998: 62) strives towards moving away from a Western, technology-oriented perspective on development, her focus on the importance of information education (North 1998: 47-62), still suggests a Western orientation. Nevertheless, the perspective taken in this study is that one cannot easily get away from a Western-oriented perspective on development and informatization, given the domination of the Western culture and life-style in the world today.

So far the importance of the adequate use of information and the creation of knowledge has been emphasized. However, in order for knowledge to be of value to anyone it needs to be disseminated so that it can be available to others to be used as new information and input to development. It is in this regard that the publisher can play an important role, as an essential component of the information infrastructure of a society.

#### 4.3 The role of the publisher in development

The publishing industry is an essential part of the intellectual and cultural system of any society and contributes to its development in more than one way (Altbach 1987: 4-5). From an information science perspective publishers are regarded as an important part of the information infrastructure of any society in that they contribute to the creation and distribution of information products, that is, books and other written material. The publisher does not operate in a vacuum, but operates within the context of both external

and internal environmental factors. What is of relevance for this study is that the publishing industry is part of a larger environment, by which it is directly influenced. On the other hand, the publishing industry can and does exert influence on the external environment (cf. § 2.3.2).

#### 4.3.1 The publisher as an information intermediary

North (1998: 136) maintains that the publisher can be regarded as an information intermediary, who, like the traditional information scientist, ‘mediates’ between the creator and the user of information, in this instance, the author and the reader. According to her (North 1998: 139-140), the creation and use of information can be divided into the following three phases:

- Phase 1: creating, packaging and distributing information
- Phase 2: organizing, storing, retrieving and making available information
- Phase 3: using information and creating new information

Traditionally intervention by an information intermediary took place in phases 1 and 2. Publishers were involved in phase 1 with the packaging and distribution of information, while other information workers, librarians especially, were involved in phase 2, in particular regarding the organization and retrieval of information. However, given the increasing sophistication of end users of information regarding the retrieval of information, there is a need for a more meaningful handling of information in phases 1 and 3. What this entails in phase 3 is not only that the end user needs to be better equipped to use information, but also that the creators of new information need real support. There is therefore a need for more intervention by the information intermediary in phases 1 and 3 of the cycle (North 1998: 141-143).

What this suggests regarding the role of the publisher, is that the publisher acts as an intermediary in phase 1 in the packaging of information and even in the conceptualizing and planning of products (North 1998: 143). The packaging of information consists mainly of the transformation of a manuscript into an accessible product, normally in the



form of a book or an electronic product such as CD-ROM. The distribution of information is evident in the actual distribution of the final product to retailers and other book distributors. Value-adding occurs in that the manuscript received from the author is edited and prepared for printing and finally produced in an accessible form and made available to the public. In phase 3 the publisher plays a role by discovering new authors and planning and creating new products (cf. § 2.3.2), in this way also contributing to the expansion of the market (North 1998: 141-143). The involvement in the creation of information and knowledge is most evident with regard to the commissioning of manuscripts when a publisher commissions an author or authors to prepare a manuscript on a given topic. This is particularly apparent today where educational publishers are increasingly becoming involved in materials development.

The type of information product created by the publisher differs depending on whether he/she is operating in a developed or a developing society. Whereas in the developed world electronic information products are increasingly created, in the developing world the focus is on *books*, since sophisticated technologies for the creation of electronic products are often unavailable (e.g. Altbach 1992: 1; Skinner 1996: 36). Zeleza (1996: 33) points out that in Africa, “books are indispensable for development” in that they contain the wealth of accumulated knowledge of a society. In his words: “The case for developing the book industry, devising policies that promote a reading culture is, therefore, imperative” (Zeleza 1996: 33).

#### 4.3.2 The publisher as a gatekeeper of knowledge

Publishers have considerable control over what appears in print, and therefore what information reaches the mainstream of society. In this way they control not only access to information, but also the means of knowledge distribution. They thus act as gatekeepers of information and knowledge (Altbach 1987: 11). This is illustrated in particular in the selection and commissioning of manuscripts. In a democratic society, where there is an emphasis on the right of access to information, the role of the publisher as a gatekeeper of information and knowledge carries with it the responsibility of bringing new information

and knowledge to the public's attention. However, publishers do not always meet their responsibility in this regard, especially when highly controversial materials are involved. In such cases very small publishers are often prepared to take the risk, or authors engage in self-publishing. In societies where there is censorship by political, religious or other authorities the publisher's task to bring new knowledge to the public's attention is severely impeded (Altbach 1987: 11-12).

#### 4.3.3 The publisher as an agent of change

Besides being a gatekeeper, the publisher can also effect change in a society. As is mentioned in Chapter 2 (cf. § 2.3.2), strong and creative publishing houses can bring about long-term effects by encouraging certain authors, areas of writing and ideas, as well as finding readers for those authors and acceptance of the ideas. Thus, in a certain sense, the publisher becomes both the initiator and the facilitator of the change brought about in a society. The role of the publisher as an agent of change is particularly evident in the development process.

#### 4.3.4 The publisher as a facilitator of development

Given the strong relationship between information and development (cf. § 4.2), it is most important that information be easily accessible in a society. Publishers play an important role in this regard since they are directly involved in the creation and dissemination of information and knowledge in the form of books and other publications. Publishers are therefore instrumental in the development process in that they make available the information and knowledge needed as input for development.

The publisher contributes to the development of a society on all levels by means of the creation of a variety of different kinds of books and other materials. One major area where the role of the publisher is evident is that of the education system. Education is regarded as one of the most important requirements for development (e.g. Knuth 1994: 79; September 1993: 14), although this fact has not always been acknowledged (Altbach

1992: 2). As it stands, the education system is one of the most important consumers and creators of knowledge in a society (Altbach 1987: xi). While textbooks and curricular materials are used to disseminate knowledge at the most basic level (primary and secondary education), scholarly journals, research monographs, and data bases are used at the most advanced levels (tertiary education and scholarly research).

Educational systems and the knowledge distribution network are directly linked and mutually dependent. At every level at educational institutions there is a need for books, journals and other written material, as well as other materials such as films and computer programmes, to disseminate knowledge (Altbach 1987: xi). As a creator of the major information and knowledge products used in the educational process, from materials for basic education to scholarly publications, the publisher is thus actively involved in the education system of a society. With regard to tertiary education, the publisher is not only involved in the creation of materials for use by students, but also contributes to the creation and dissemination of knowledge in the form of scholarly publication. In this way the publisher is instrumental in the contribution that is made by researchers to both the local and the international knowledge system (cf. § 1.4.3.2).

Furthermore, by doing market research and finding authors to write books to meet the needs of the society the publisher contributes towards the creation of indigenous knowledge, which is necessary for sustainable development. In the process of creating information products the publisher indirectly trains others involved in the process, such as authors and designers. By getting actively involved in the training of new publishers, the publisher becomes involved in the development of the industry itself, which once again illustrates that the publishing industry is both the vehicle and the product of development (cf. § 3.2.2.2 (a)).

As can be seen from the above discussion, the publisher plays a vital role as a facilitator of development in a society. Whereas this role is important in all societies, it is particularly important in developing societies.

#### 4.3.5 The role of the publisher in developing societies

In order for sustainable development to take place in a society enough members in that society need to have critical thinking skills so that they can change information into knowledge that can be used as input to development (cf. § 1.4.3). The individuals in a society therefore need to be educated in such a way that enough of them develop the skills necessary to sustain development in that society. This can be done by incorporating information education in the education system (cf. § 4.2). Given the fact that educational publishing constitutes the bulk of publishing activities in developing countries (Altbach 1992: 9), the role of the publisher in a developing society becomes particularly important.

While in developed countries the role of the publisher as a creator of educational materials increasingly entails the creation of electronic products, the focus in developing countries is on the school textbook. In fact, in developing societies, Africa especially, the textbook market dominates the publishing scene (Altbach 1992: 9; Chakava 1996: 17; Zeleza 1996: 34). The textbook has a particularly prominent role in developing societies (e.g. Farrel & Heyneman 1989: 5; Gopinathan 1989: 2; McCallum 1995: 128), although the importance of textbooks in the education systems of highly developed societies has also been pointed out (Altbach 1991: 1; Hummel 1988: 13-15). Hugo 1991 (Pretorius *in press*) points out that in secondary schools an estimated 75% of information input comes from textbooks, which underscores the necessity of good textbooks in any education system.

In developing countries it is essential that textbooks contain indigenous knowledge that can be used as input to development so that these societies can become less dependent on the major international creators of knowledge in the world. However, for indigenous materials to be developed, there is a need for a strong indigenous publishing industry in a society (Altbach 1992: 2-3; Montagnes 1992: 231). The role of the publisher in a developing society is therefore twofold: on the one hand, educational materials need to be developed according to the principles of information education; on the other hand, the local publishing industry needs to be developed by means of *inter alia* the training of new indigenous publishers and the further training of local publishers already in the field

(Chakava 1996: 38, 70; Czerniewicz 1994: 56). As can be seen, the dual role of the publisher in developing societies ties in very well with the key issues identified in 1994 as being bound to have an influence on publishing in South Africa after 1994 (cf. § 3.2.2.2).

The development of suitable educational materials and the development of the local publishing industry are equally important issues, both of which deserve attention. However, because of the limited scope of this study only one issue is addressed, namely, the development of suitable educational materials for an education system that incorporates the principles of information education. This is done within the context of a changing South African society that is still undergoing the process of transformation initiated by a new government voted into Parliament in April 1994.

#### 4.4 The South African context

South Africa's history is tainted by the policy of apartheid, which for decades effectively prevented the majority of South Africa's people from developing into first class citizens of this country. Two areas where this policy of discrimination was particularly evident are those of the education system and language policies. It is therefore no wonder that these areas receive pertinent attention in government publications (e.g. DE 1995: Ch. 3; LANGTAG 1996a: 14). In the next sections a closer look is taken at each of these areas.

##### 4.4.1 Education in South Africa

As part of its human resource development strategy, as embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the South African government has proposed a new education and training system, which incorporates the notion of lifelong learning in terms of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on a system of credits for learning outcomes achieved. A major feature of the new education system is the integration of education and training by means of one system that regulates education on all levels and thus makes education available to all (e.g. DE 1995: Ch. 2; DE 1997c: 2-5).

On the surface, the new education system seems to adhere to the principles underlying information education programmes: an outcomes-based approach to education is followed, outcomes being described as the results of learning processes, and referring to “knowledge, skills, attitudes and values within particular contexts” (King 1997).

Outcomes-based learning is also regarded as central to the concept of lifelong learning (DE 1997d: 18). The new education system therefore seems to fit in well with the growing international trend in the 1990s to teach information skills by integrating them into the existing curricula (Behrens 1994: 317), which has resulted in a change of the way the teaching/learning process is viewed. Within the traditional paradigm, teaching and learning depended to a large extent on the teacher/lecturer and the textbook, while within the new paradigm, learning is regarded “not as transmission of information but rather as the generation of critical skills in learners to search for, evaluate and use information” (Sayed & De Jager 1997: 7).

However, as Behrens (1995: 261) points out, there is no mention of the importance of information skills in the White Paper on education (DE 1995). In fact, the concept of lifelong learning is not actually defined in any of the documents she researched, but seems to refer to mobility within the education and training system (Behrens 1995: 253). The integration of education and training, which is in line with international trends in curriculum development (DE 1995: Ch.2, § 6), seems to be the main principle underlying the new education system and the new curriculum. However, the adherence to this approach seems to be more politically than educationally motivated. The division between education and training is namely regarded as having contributed to the reproduction of occupational and social class distinctions in the past (DE 1995: Ch.2, § 4). This past ‘sin’ can seemingly be done away with by means of integrating education and training. In fact, the new education system is seen as *inter alia* a way of redressing the imbalances of the past (cf. DE 1995: Ch.3; DE 1997c: 2, 8).

To get a better understanding of the new education system for South Africa it is necessary to have a look at the newly established National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the curriculum encompassing the principles of the NQF, namely Curriculum 2005.

#### 4.4.1.1 The NQF

The NQF, a major feature of the new education system, has been created to facilitate the integration of education and training. The aims of the NQF are to provide learning opportunities for learners regardless of age, circumstances, gender and level of education and training, and to allow learners to learn on an ongoing basis. According to the Department of Education the NQF can only be effective if there is a change from a content-based approach to an outcomes-based approach to education and training, which is exactly the approach followed in Curriculum 2005 (DE 1997c: 4-5).

#### 4.4.1.2 Curriculum 2005

The new curriculum framework for curriculum development in South Africa, Curriculum 2005, its name referring to the plan to have the curriculum in place and reviewed in 2005 (MacGregor 1997), largely adheres to the principles of information education, although it is doubtful whether these principles were used as a point of departure when the curriculum was developed. The major feature of Curriculum 2005 is the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE). OBE is characterized by two focal points: *outcomes*, that is, the results expected at the end of each learning process, and the *processes* by means of which the learners reach the outcomes (DE 1997c: 9).

##### (a) Outcomes

There are two groups of outcomes, the first of which is called *critical cross-field outcomes*. These generic cross-curricular outcomes, which have been proposed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), underpin the Constitution and form the foundation of the curriculum. There are seven basic critical outcomes (DE 1997d: 19):

- 1 Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
- 2 Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community
- 3 Organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively



- 4 Collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information
- 5 Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/or language skills in various modes
- 6 Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others
- 7 Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation

As can be seen, outcomes 1, 4 and 6 tie in very closely with the critical thinking skills required to change information into knowledge, a process that is essential for sustainable development in a society.

*Specific outcomes* refer to the specific knowledge, attitudes and understanding that should be displayed in a particular context. For instance, one of the seven specific outcomes of the learning area of language, literacy and communication is that learners should make and negotiate meaning and understanding (DE 1997e: 23). (Incidentally, this *specific outcome* is quoted as an example of the “incomprehensible jargon” (Anstey 1998) used by education departments.)

(b) Processes

The new curriculum presupposes a change in the teaching and learning processes by means of which the learners reach the outcomes. Teaching needs to become learner-centred, with a focus on groupwork and the ability of people to think critically and to research and analyse matters independently (DE 1997c: 9). These latter skills once again refer to the critical thinking skills necessary for development in a society. The new curriculum, if applied successfully, should therefore make a contribution towards the development of South African society into an information society, even though the main motive behind it might have been of a political rather than an educational nature.

Curriculum 2005 brings with it a number of changes. Besides the change from a content-



based to a learner-based approach, the ‘traditional’ subjects of the old curriculum have been replaced by the following eight ‘learning areas’ (DE 1997d: 8), which represent a mix between general and specialized skills development (BDCSA 1997: 87):

- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Human and Social Sciences
- Technology
- Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Arts and Culture
- Economics and Management Science
- Life Orientation

The changes brought about by the new education system necessitate the development of new educational material. In order to ensure the effective running of the new education system, support material in the form of notes, textbooks or notebooks for both educators and learners is necessary. Not only is there a need for new contents, especially in those learning areas that do not overlap with traditional school subjects, but also for a totally new approach in terms of the presentation of the contents (DE 1995: Ch. 4, §17; Hummel 1988: 117-120). This situation necessarily has an impact on the publishing industry in that the publisher plays a major role in the development and distribution of educational materials. In a multilingual country such as South Africa the issue of language policy further complicates the matter in that decisions need to be made as to the choice of language(s) in which to publish.

#### 4.4.2 Language planning in South Africa

Past language policies in South Africa have had a detrimental influence on the development of many, if not the majority, of South Africans in that there was “unacceptable subordination of marginalised groups under a dominant group” (LANGTAG1996a: v). Language policies for education in particular have had a devastating effect on the education of black learners in South Africa, so much so that the

majority of them are severely disadvantaged today. Black learners in general are exposed to “subtractive bilingualism” (Lambert 1975: 67), which refers to a situation where high exposure to a second language (L2) in school hampers the continued development of the first language (L1), which adversely affects the development of bilingualism. The ideal in a bilingual context is “additive bilingualism” (Lambert 1975: 67), which refers to a situation where exposure to the L2 facilitates rapid bilingual development with no adverse effect on the L1 (cf. Heugh 1995: 43-45, 48; Wessels 1996: 162-188 for more detailed discussions).

Regarding the status of the major languages spoken in South Africa, English and Dutch have enjoyed official status since 1910, Dutch being replaced by Afrikaans in 1925. The other nine major indigenous languages, which have all been reduced to writing, enjoyed official status on a regional basis, each in a separate homeland (Schuring 1993: 110), until April 1994 when a new interim constitution was accepted. In this constitution detailed attention was given to the issue of language policy, with particular emphasis on the development of the indigenous African languages. It was also stated that an Act of Parliament would make provision for the establishment by Senate of a Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) to promote respect for the principles mentioned above and to further the development of the official South African languages as well as all other languages used in South Africa (*Government Gazette* 28 January 1994: 4-6).

In contrast, the final constitution gives much less attention to the issue of language policy. In a paragraph containing five points the 11 languages are mentioned and, referring to the “historically diminished use and status” (Constitutional Assembly 1996: 5) of the indigenous languages, it is stated that the state must take positive measures to elevate the status of these languages and promote their use. Attention is also given to how the official languages may be used by national and provincial governments. Furthermore, it is stated that the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) should *inter alia* promote the development and use of all official languages (Constitutional Assembly 1996: 6).

Besides the overall difference in focus between the two constitutions there is also the

significant fact that the interim constitution made provision for PANSALB to be established by Senate, while in the new constitution no provision is made for a senate. (PANSALB was in fact established in 1995 under the PANSALB Act, namely Act No. 59 of 1995). This situation is problematic since the authority of PANSALB becomes rather doubtful, which suggests that the government is not taking the issue of language policies as seriously as it apparently did in 1994 (cf. also *Pretoria News* 4 April 1997: 5; LANGTAG 1996a: i; Louwrens 1996: 5-8).

The same apparent reluctance to promote the indigenous African languages is evident when the language policy for education is considered. This new policy was published as Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) on 14 July 1997 (DE 1997b), that is, more than three years after the new dispensation came into being in April 1994. The delay in the formulation of this language policy can to some extent be ascribed to the delay in the formulation of a language policy for South Africa as a whole, which was finally laid down in the constitution adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996 (Constitutional Assembly 1996).

The new language policy for education is regarded as part of a national language plan encompassing all sectors of society and encourages the development of multilingualism within society at large, as an integral part of the government's plan to build a non-racial nation in South Africa (DE 1997b: 1-2). While various requirements for different grades are spelt out with regard to languages as subjects, the policy for the language of learning is the following: "The language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s)" (DE 1997b: 3). The learner must choose the language of teaching upon admission to a particular school (1997b: 4).

In theory the new language policy for education clearly addresses the problem of subtractive bilingualism by promoting the notion of additive bi-/multilingualism. However, the final language policy without a doubt creates the possibility for schools to use only one language of learning, provided it is an official language. In fact, in a publication aimed at explaining the new curriculum, it is stated: "A learner in a public school shall have the

right to instruction in the language of his or her choice *where this is reasonably practicable* [author's emphasis]" (DE 1997c: 23), leaving open the option for schools to opt for the *status quo*, simply because it is not practicable at present to implement a policy of multilingualism.

Therefore, even though the new policy purports to be promoting additive multilingualism, it does not lay down the condition necessary for this model of education to be effective in South Africa, namely, L1 maintenance for a significant number of years, preferably until the end of schooling (Heugh 1995: 47). It therefore remains to be seen how seriously the policy of additive bi-/multilingualism will be pursued in practice. In all fairness it should be stated that the Department of Education admitted from the start that the implementation of the policy was a long-term goal and that factors such as the availability of textbooks would affect the situation (Altenroxel 1997).

Besides the apparent reluctance of the government to promote multilingualism in practice, prevailing attitudes and perceptions in society at large also contribute to the perpetuation of the hegemony of English in South African education (Altenroxel 1998b; Heugh 1995: 48-49). According to Ms Salama Hendriks, director of Schools and early Childhood Development, "[t]he challenge for the department is to benchmark the implementation [of the language policy for education]" (Altenroxel 1998b: 7).

In the light of the discussion above it seems reasonable to suggest that the policy of multilingual education will most probably not be fully implemented in South African schools, at least not in the immediate future. At best the situation will continue where teachers switch between the L1 and English depending on their proficiency in the particular languages. This suggests that textbooks will continue to be written mainly in English for English Second Language (ESL) speakers, which adds a further dimension to the issue of textbook writing, given the poor quality of existing textbooks for ESL learners (e.g. Macdonald 1990: 141; Van Rooyen 1990; Potenza 1993: 48).

It is clear that the issues of education and language policy are no simple matters and

directly affect the role of (educational) publishers at present in South Africa.

#### 4.5 The role of educational publishers in South Africa

McCallum (1995: 127) argues that educational publishers are a key player in the implementation of policy, and should therefore be part of the consultation process in education policy. Approaching the issue from a different angle, Oliphant (1993: 100) maintains that “all publishing ultimately depends on a sound educational system that fosters a culture of reading and stresses the value of information as an element in all forms of social life and decision-making”. It is therefore imperative for publishers to engage in the educational debate.

In South Africa the educational debate since 1994 has largely been on the use, production and supply of textbooks in a new education system. This is understandable, in the light of the centrality of the textbook in the South African education system (BDCSA 1997: 88; McCallum 1995: 128). The debate has centred round three main issues, namely the impact of OBE on educational publishing, the role of education departments in materials development, and the decentralization of the selection and supply of learning material (BDCSA 1997: 85-95).

##### 4.5.1 The impact of OBE on educational publishing

It is clear that the changes in the education system and the language policy have a direct influence on the development of new educational material. In the first place there is a need for new content, given the new learning areas spelt out in Curriculum 2005. In the second place, this new content needs to be presented in such a way that the ideal of an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning is achieved. In the light of the poor quality of textbooks produced in the past (cf. § 3.2.2), it goes without saying that existing textbooks cannot be reproduced as they are. In fact, the textbooks needed for Curriculum 2005 need to be fundamentally different to ensure the success of the new system and to ultimately contribute to the development of South African society (DE 1995: Ch. 4, § 17).

An issue that complicates matters further is that of the language of publication. On the one hand, there might be a need for textbooks in African languages, which immediately raises the question of the need for editors, translators and applied linguists in African languages as well as the issue of the problems regarding terminology in these languages (McCallum 1995: 134). On the other hand, in the absence of an active implementation of a policy of multilingualism, textbooks that are really suitable for ESL speakers will have to be developed. Although some publishers do acknowledge the need for applied linguistic input in textbooks (e.g. McCallum 1995), the author is of the opinion that both textbook writers and publishers in general are not aware of the severity of the problem of textbooks in English that are inaccessible to ESL speakers.

Developing new textbooks is no easy matter. At least three years is needed from the time the curriculum is released until the time that the textbook is implemented in the classroom to produce a good textbook. This allows time for writing, editing, design, production, trialling, rewriting, submission for approval, printing, marketing to schools, ordering and supply. Unfortunately, in the past publishers were often given only six months to produce a book (McCallum 1996: 58-59). Now, more than ever before, such a situation cannot be tolerated. It is of the utmost importance that good quality textbooks are created so that the development process can be speeded up, more especially among those children who have in the past been severely disadvantaged in the education system.

#### 4.5.2 The role of education departments in materials development

In South Africa the issue of who should produce the new educational materials has been hotly debated between officials of the provincial education departments on the one hand and publishers through PASA on the other. The background to the debate lies in the history of corruption, mismanagement and conformation to the apartheid policies of the day by educational publishers in South Africa (e.g. McCallum 1996: 59; Moss 1993: 29). Understandably, this has led to a great deal of suspicion and mistrust among some government officials and teachers who believe that the publishing industry has not done enough to show its commitment to a new role in South Africa (BDCSA 1997: 90-91).

The education officials argue as follows (BDCSA 1997: 91):

- Publishers cannot produce books in time for the implementation of the new curriculum
- There is not enough time for the trialling of materials
- Publishers make excessive profits
- State publishing will be more cost-effective
- Publishers are not committed to transforming education
- Teachers should be empowered through developing materials

The publishers, through PASA, argue as follows (BDCSA 1997: 91):

- Publishers have the skills, resources, experience and capital to accept the huge challenge in attaining the deadlines of the new curriculum
- The lack of time for trialling of materials applies to anyone who is developing material
- The publishing industry is a very small and fragile industry, with an estimated total turnover of R1,5 billion (in 1997) and an average 7,5% return on sales
- No monopoly, whether state or private, is cost-effective in the absence of competition that keeps costs down
- Publishers have in the past produced excellent educational materials, but selectors from education departments often opt for older, more familiar material
- Publishers are committed to developing writing skills in those teachers with expertise in their subjects

What emerges from this debate is that although the publishing industry is competent to meet the educational challenge of the new South Africa, the industry is mistrusted by some teachers and educational officials, for two reasons: the past close relationship with the apartheid government, and the perceived lack of clear indications as to how the industry plans to become part of the national development plan (BDCSA 1997: 93). This is a sad situation because the publishing industry clearly has the know-how to develop educational material, while the same cannot be said of education departments in general. In the end those who will suffer will be the learners of South Africa, who will not be

receiving a proper education due to a lack of good textbooks and other educational material in the classroom.

#### 4.5.3 Decentralizing the selection and supply of learning material

The third major aspect of the current debate concerns the issue of the selection of school textbooks and prescribed literature, and area that needs drastic transformation given the corruption of the past (e.g. Moss 1993; Proctor & Monteith 1993). PASA and the Department of Education do not fully agree on the advantages, disadvantages or implementation of a submission system. While the department is in favour of a single interprovincial committee for the evaluation of textbooks, PASA believes that teachers who would be using the books in the classroom should make the decisions. PASA's view is more in line with the South African Schools Act, which tends toward a school-based system of education management, which increases the possibilities of localized decision-making (BDCSA 1997: 94).

The debate between the government and the publishing industry indicates that the issue of materials development is rather contentious, with much tension between the two opposing parties. Given the importance of a relationship of cooperation between the government and the publishing industry to ensure the effective implementation of the new educational policy, the perceived tension between the two parties suggests that the implementation of the new curriculum is due to be fraught with difficulties.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

To summarize the discussion in this chapter it can be stated that development entails the process of informatization, namely, the process whereby the members of a society become information literate, that is, acquire the relevant attitudes, knowledge and skills to deal with information adequately. In order to bring about sustainable development in a society, critical thinking skills especially are needed, which enable people to change information into knowledge that can be used as new information and input in the development cycle.



In this process publishers play a central role in that they form part of the information infrastructure of a society and make available information to readers in the form of books and other materials, from basic readers and books of general interest to scholarly publications.

Education is crucially important in bringing about development in a society. To ensure that critical thinking skills are developed by members of the society information education needs to be incorporated into the education system. This necessitates a different approach to education, which in turn leads to a need for new educational material. While in any society the development of good educational material is important, it is essential in developing societies. The role of the educational publisher therefore becomes particularly important in a developing country.

In South Africa major changes in education and language policy have taken place, with a new NQF and a new curriculum having been developed. Given these changes, the educational publisher is faced with a daunting challenge to develop suitable material for the new curriculum. However, the future role of the publishing industry in this regard is not clear, as can be seen from the tension between education officials and PASA.

In the next chapter the challenge brought about the new education system, including the new policy for language in education, is summarized briefly, and attention is given to the current crisis experienced in the publishing industry.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CHALLENGE AND THE CRISIS FACING THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

#### 5.0 Synopsis

In this chapter the challenge brought about by the changes in the education system and the language policy is discussed briefly before the crisis in the publishing industry receives more attention. Developments in publishing since 1994 are discussed and it is shown how they have contributed to the present crisis in the industry.

#### 5.1 Introduction

The changes brought about by the new political dispensation in South Africa have created an exciting challenge for the publishing industry, particularly with regard to its role in development. The major element in the development of South African society, the education system, has changed dramatically, with a totally new approach to education and training. Furthermore, there is a new language policy in place, which places an emphasis on the development of the South African languages that have in the past been disadvantaged.

The South African publishing industry has the resources to meet the challenge brought about by the new dispensation. However, in order for it to contribute to development on the one hand and remain a viable business on the other, there needs to be a good working relationship and cooperation between the industry and the government of the day. Indications are that this is not the case at present, with the result that both the publishing industry and the new education system face a very bleak future.

#### 5.2 The challenge facing the industry

As is mentioned in Chapter 4 (cf. § 4.5.1), the new curriculum necessitates the

development of new educational material in order to implement the principles of OBE, which goes hand in hand with the concept of lifelong learning. Within an information science perspective lifelong learners can be characterized as learners who:

- are information consumers capable of finding and utilizing information for any need in their personal or working lives
- are self-directed, independent learners
- are able to adjust to change
- take responsibility for their own learning
- are capable of operating dynamically in their own education
- have an instilled tendency to learn in the future
- can continue with the learning process once out of the formal education and training system (Behrens 1995: 257-258).

The fact that many of South African learners lack the qualities described above (Behrens 1995: 258), suggests an urgent need for the implementation of OBE. However, this cannot take place without the necessary educational material, specifically textbooks, that have been developed according to the principles of lifelong learning. Within the perspective of lifelong learning one of the most important functions of the textbook is that the learner can develop familiarity with books and can develop skills in using books as “indispensable working instruments for cognitive development” (Hummel 1988: 15). Through their books learners learn to read in order to learn. This is very important in any society in the information age today. As Cochrane (1997) points out: “Whether or not one lives in an information/knowledge society one certainty is that everyone will be required to possess the ability to learn”. In South Africa this matter becomes pressing, in the light of the fact that so many learners at tertiary level do not possess the necessary reading skills to access information from the texts they study (Pretorius *in press*).

The school textbook is the most important source of reading in the education system and the principal source of information on the subject being studied. Besides conveying a body of knowledge, the textbook also transmits values and attempts to influence attitudes. The school textbook can therefore be instrumental in bringing about change. Textbooks adopt

a given pedagogical approach and are a reflection of the curriculum whose objectives they convey. While a rigid and conservative curriculum has no place for innovative textbooks, a curriculum that embodies the concept of lifelong learning brings forth innovative textbooks (Hummel 1988: 16-19). Hummel (1988: 117-120) mentions a number of features of innovative textbooks that facilitate lifelong learning, these features relating to format, content, language and methodological approaches.

From Hummel's description of the ideal textbook for an OBE approach, it is clear that a paradigm shift is needed from both textbooks writers and publishers, who have previously operated within the framework of Christian National Education (Moss 1993: 26). Furthermore, intensive input in the form of sheer hard work is required in order to develop materials that meet these criteria.

The publishing industry has the skills and resources to meet this challenge. Even though existing textbooks in the South African education system clearly lack many of the characteristics needed to foster independent thought and innovative thinking (e.g. HSRC 1998), some innovative material has been produced in the past (McCallum 1996a: 58), which suggests the potential for creating more innovative material for the new curriculum.

An issue that Hummel (1988) mentions, which in the author's opinion does not receive the attention it deserves, is that of language. According to Hummel, language that is in line with the concept of lifelong education is *inter alia* "clear, precise, and matches the reading abilities of the target group" (Hummel 1988: 119). The style is direct and lively, sometimes conversational, so that the textbook writer engages in a dialogue with the learner. Research in South Africa has shown that the language generally used in textbooks, especially for ESL learners, is *not* in line with the reading abilities of the target group (e.g. Macdonald 1990a; MacKay & De Klerk 1996; Potenza 1993), and seldom uses an interactive approach (HSRC 1998).

Macdonald (1990a: 141), for instance, refers to the "virtual unusability" of conventional textbooks because they do not prepare ESL students to deal with cognitively demanding

tasks in English. Van Rooyen (1990) illustrates the disparity between English used as a subject and English used as a language of learning. Potenza (1993) points out that although some textbook writers in the past have attempted to write in a more interactive manner, the language used is “overly demanding by any standards” (Potenza 1993: 48) and often makes textbooks incomprehensible to learners, largely because textbook writers ignore the level of literacy in English of the target audience. MacKay & De Klerk (1996: 216) found that: “Far from being a learning aid, the textbook is a serious barrier” that can prevent access to information because of its unnecessary complexity for ESL students.

Pretorius (1993), who studied history and general science textbooks used by English L1 learners in Grade 5, found that in the case of textbooks where there was not a clear indication of causality in the text, learners had difficulties with text comprehension and the retention of content, a situation that becomes even worse in the case of ESL learners. The HSRC (1998) points out the relationship between the lack of quality Science and Mathematics textbooks and the weak performance of South African students in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. The findings mentioned here are rather alarming, even more so in the light of the government’s focus on the importance of science and technology in the White Paper on Science and Technology (DACST 1996).

The discussion on language clearly illustrates the need for educational publishers to pay particular attention to the accessibility of the language used by textbook writers, and to consider the involvement of applied linguists in the development of learning materials, even though this may have an influence on costs (cf. Van Rooyen 1990: 107; McCallum 1995: 135).

What is evident at present is that the new curriculum and the new language policy present publishers with a major challenge to develop good quality educational material. Given the poor quality of existing textbooks in the system the need for new material becomes particularly urgent. However, all indications are that the publishing industry is experiencing a severe crisis at present, which has serious implications for the developmental role of publishers in South Africa.

### 5.3 The crisis facing the publishing industry

In March 1997 the South African publishing industry was described as being well established and skilled compared to the rest of Africa. Nevertheless, it was facing critical problems regarding expansion and growth. Educational publishing was still dominated by huge indigenous companies that had traditionally had control over certain markets. The three largest companies were Perskor Publishers (with Educum its largest subsidiary), Nasionale Pers (with Nasou and Via Africa its largest subsidiaries) and Kagiso Publishers (formerly Haum Publishers), which became a subsidiary of Perskor Publishers when Kagiso Trust Investment Company became a joint controller of Perskor through the Perskor/Kagiso merger (Efrat 1997). Other major players were Juta, Maskew-Miller Longman, Van Schaik, Macmillan, Heinemann, Oxford University Press, Shuter & Shooter, and Hodder & Stoughton Educational (BDCSA 1997: 83-83).

At the time of writing (September 1998), the situation in the publishing industry has changed dramatically, with publishers experiencing a severe crisis that threatens their continued existence. In order to put this crisis into perspective, it is necessary to consider some of the developments on the educational scene since 1994 and how they have contributed to the current situation in the publishing industry. This is done within the same framework as the one used in Chapter 3 (cf. § 3.2.2.2), which focuses on the developmental role of the publisher on the one hand, and the facilitating role of the government on the other.

#### 5.3.1 Developments since 1994

In 1994 there were certain key issues that had been identified as issues expected to influence the future of publishing in South Africa. These issues could broadly be divided into those that related to the role of the publisher in development and those that related to the role of the government in creating an environment conducive to publishing (cf. § 3.2.2.2). In the discussion that follows these issues are considered again and the developments in these areas since 1994 investigated.

### 5.3.1.1 The role of the publisher

The role of the publisher in development is regarded as pertaining to both the development of society in general and the development of the industry. While the general issues relate mainly to education and language policy, those concerning the publishing industry relate to the need for transformation in the industry, the need to expand book distribution, the lack of a body of knowledge concerning the industry, and the opportunities for cooperation with other African countries.

#### (a) General development

As has been shown so far, this study regards the developmental role of the publisher to be of particular importance in the fields of education and language policy. It is clear that the educational publishers in South Africa are aware of this role and have since the early 1990s prepared themselves to become actively involved in the development process. However, their efforts in this regard have been severely hampered.

#### (i) Education

In 1994 and immediately afterwards the publishing industry was gearing itself for the new dispensation (cf. § 3.2.2) and preparing to get involved in the development of material for the new education system. The eyes of the publishing world were on South African publishers, who seemed to be very enthusiastic about the exciting challenges that lay ahead (e.g. Taylor 1996; *The Bookseller* 1996).

However, it soon became clear that the process of developing a new curriculum was going to take a long time. For instance, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, which enabled the establishment of a body to develop the NQF, the framework for the new curriculum, was passed 18 months after the first democratic elections, on 4 October 1995. Seven months later, by the end of May 1996, the appointments to the Authority were announced. The first meeting of SAQA was held two

months after that, from 2-4 August 1996 (French *et al.* 1997: 4). The first edition of the *SAQA Bulletin* appeared in May/June 1997, that is, more than three years after the new dispensation came into being.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a reluctance on the part of education officials in the various provinces to give publishers access to the process of developing the new curriculum (McCallum 1996b). There were constant indications of the possibility of state publishing (BDCSA 1997: 90-93; Cook 1996; McCallum 1996b; Prabhakaran 1998). In October 1996 McCallum (1996b) pointed out that PASA had initiated a series of constructive meetings with the national Department of Education, which had made it clear that the role of the national ministry was to establish policy, norms and targets, but that implementation and funding, as well as decisions about the provision of books depended on the provinces. About the perceived lack of communication between the provinces and the industry she commented as follows: “There is a great deal of discussion behind closed doors, nothing has been put on paper, and the issue has been omitted from the agendas of the various public workshops and meetings that have been held” (McCallum 1996b).

Although accusations by the publishing industry regarding possible state intervention in the publishing process were constantly denied by the Department of Education, it is significant that a publication introducing the new curriculum explicitly states that adequate learning support material “will be provided and distributed by the provincial departments on an ad hoc basis where it is relevant” (DE 1997c: 24). This learning material is described as including “support material for the teachers ... as well as the learners, e.g. in the form of notes, textbooks or workbooks” (DE 1997c: 24). This discrepancy is a clear indication that the publishers’ fear of a possible state monopoly in educational publishing was justified.

Curriculum 2005, developed according to the principles of the NQF, was released three years after the April 1994 elections, on 25 March 1997 (e.g. *Beeld* 26 March 1997: 2). The planned schedule for implementation was as follows (DE 1997c: 18):

1998 - Grades 1 and 7





1999	-	Grades 2 and 8
2000	-	Grades 3 and 9
2001	-	Grades 4 and 10
2002	-	Grades 5 and 11
2003	-	Grades 6 and 12

The extremely delayed publication of the new curriculum left publishers with only a few months to develop material. However, they “took on the impossible in good faith” (Kantey 1998) and began developing books for Grades 1 and 7, “working around the clock, often employing additional staff” (Altenroxel 1998a). The costs involved “were probably in excess of R100 million” (Kantey 1998), with major printers investing millions of rands in imported equipment in anticipation of the demand.

By February/March 1998 it became clear that there was a serious problem in the education system. Not only did learners in Grade 1 not have the required textbooks for the implementation of Curriculum 2005, but there was a dire shortage of textbooks for all other grades, with only two provinces having ordered books for the new school year. In an attempt to kick-start the implementation of the new curriculum, the department had commenced with the development of booklets for teachers and pupils, an operation that cost R5,4-million (Anstey 1998). These developments had a severe impact on publishers, who sat with huge stocks and no outlet for their books.

In April 1998 the implementation of Curriculum 2005 was delayed for the third time in three years when it was announced by the Department of Education that the new curriculum would no longer be implemented in Grade 7 in 1998. Although educationists were happy about the announcement, the news came as a shock to educational publishers, who had spent “vast sums of money” (Altenroxel 1998a) on developing material for the new curriculum. The blow was particularly severe, given the fact that as from 1996 there had already been a drastic cutback in textbook expenditure, with figures dropping from R851-million in the 1995/1996 financial year to R381-million in 1996/1997 (Pretorius 1998b). By that time there had already been retrenchments in the publishing industry, with

an estimated total of 40% retrenchment in the educational publishing sector (Kantey 1998; Prabhakaran 1998) and the laying off of 7 000 print union members (Kantey 1998).

By May/June 1998 it was clear that the Department of Education was beset with problems and that the implementation of Curriculum 2005 was anything but successful (e.g. Kobokoane 1998; Pretorius 1998a, 1998b). The Education Department Deputy Director-General himself admitted that there were “problems within the system - particularly with learner material (textbooks)” (Altenroxel 1998c). While it is understandable that such a mammoth task as restructuring the education system cannot be completed overnight, it is very disturbing that the making of policy took so long and that the implementation of the policy seems to be largely unsuccessful.

Various reasons have been forwarded for the delay in the implementation of the new curriculum, *inter alia* budget constraints and the government’s macro-economic policy of GEAR, with its strict policy on reducing the budget deficit and cutting back on government spending (e.g. Kobokoane 1998). However, there are clear indications that the lack of funds can to a large extent be ascribed to mismanagement and corruption, given the fact that Education received 22% (R45-billion) of the R201-billion national budget in 1998 (Kabokoane 1998).

The situation described above clearly bodes no good for education in South Africa. Furthermore, it has a severely negative impact on the publishing industry, in that the publishing industry is dependent on the educational market for survival. A collapse in the industry in turn severely affects the education system in that there can be no proper education and therefore ultimately no development within society a large without proper textbooks. The education system and the publishing industry are therefore clearly interdependent, and should the present situation continue, they will both collapse.

(ii) Language policy

The final constitution, which spells out the language policy, was adopted in May 1996

(Constitutional Assembly 1996), two years after April 1994. The policy for language in education was announced on 14 July 1997 (DE 1997b: 1), more than a year after the adoption of the final constitution and more than three years after the elections in April 1994. Since then there has been no significant progress in this regard. In general there seems to be a lack of commitment on government's side regarding the use and development of the indigenous languages (BDCSA 1997: 79), which is in stark contrast to Samuel's (1993: 19) suggestion that the new government "could also actively encourage the development of translation facilities and expertise, to ensure that publishing in a wide range of South African languages can be accomplished cost-effectively".

Potentially the publishing industry has a key role to play in the development of the African languages. So far publishing in these languages has been thwarted by a number of obstacles, such as a lack of consensus regarding the rendition of African languages in print, as well as the concern by writers that they have to write in the standard form of a language and not in the variety used by people when they speak (BDCSA 1997: 76).

Because of the vagueness of the language policy for education and the general absence of clear guidelines to schools in this regard, the language situation seems to be still in flux and will probably take some time before it settles from province to province (*The Bookseller* 1996: 23). Although some publishers have started experimenting with the different language options, Ntshangase (Taylor 1996: 43) points out that there is still much work to be done. However, there seems to be an increasing tendency towards English as the sole language of learning, for instance in KwaZulu-Natal (*The Bookseller* 1996: 23), which suggests that not much publishing in the African languages will eventually take place. There will rather be more emphasis on the development of material for ESL learners.

#### (b) Development of the industry

The four key issues that were regarded in 1994 as relating to the development of the publishing industry as such are those of transformation, research on publishing, book

distribution and co-operation with the rest of Africa. Only brief attention is given to the developments in these areas since 1994 as they are not the focus of this study.

(i) Transformation

The need for transformation of the industry that was expressed in 1994 revolved mainly round the issues of black empowerment and training. Before 1994 the process of transformation in the publishing industry had already begun, albeit perhaps rather superficial (Krut 1993: 4; Moss 1993: 29; Czerniewicz 1994: 6). Since 1994 more changes have been taking place, particularly with regard to the ownership of educational book publishers. For instance, in 1994 the Kagiso Trust Investment (KTI) company, acquired a 40% stake in Haum Publishers, which was subsequently named Kagiso Publishers (Kobokoane 1996). In April 1997 KTI became joint controller of Perskor through Persbel, which resulted in Perskor's taking over of Kagiso Publishers (Efrat 1997). However, in April 1998 the situation changed significantly when Perskor merged with Caxton/CTP, and Kagiso's stake in the merged company diminished to 3 % (Lunsche 1998). Kagiso has subsequently announced its plans to sell its 3% stake (Hlophe 1998).

Since 1994 more attention has been given to the issue of training, both by the industry itself and by some institutions of higher learning. Under the auspices of PASA, the industry has become involved in in-house training through the Publishing Training Project (Van Rooyen 1996: 234-237), as well as consultancy services to publishers and NGOs (BDCSA 1997: 85). The University of Pretoria commenced with an Honours/Master's course in publishing in January 1995, and the first Honours students received their degree in April 1998. Since January 1997 students may also enrol for a fully-fledged BA course in publishing. The University of the Witwatersrand, under the auspices of the African Literature Department, started with an Honours/Master's course in publishing studies in January 1996. Although these are positive developments, training takes place on an ad hoc basis and there is no qualifications framework for the industry as yet (BDCSA 1997: 85).

(ii) Research

In 1994, when the role of the publishing industry in the new dispensation became very topical, the need for a body of knowledge on publishing issues became apparent. To a certain extent the lack of research on publishing can be ascribed to the fragmented industry and the lack of unity among publishers brought about by policies in the past. This situation has since improved. For instance, the Book Development Council of South Africa, which was established in 1996 has already published a research report on book development in South Africa (BDCSA 1997). The University of Pretoria has a number of MA students doing research on publishing issues, and the first research MA in Publishing was conferred at a graduation ceremony on 15 April 1998 (*viz* North 1998).

(iii) Book distribution

An issue that has been pointed out by various researchers is the need for more effective book distribution channels, specifically with regard to that sector of the population that has previously not had access to books (Machet 1993: 171-172; Van Rooyen 1996: 7,17). There is at present a strong focus on creating a reading culture, in South Africa as well as the rest of Africa (Chakava 1996: 163-170; Taylor 1996: 43; Zeleza 1996: 33). However, creating and maintaining a reading culture requires *inter alia* a good distribution network, especially in the areas that are accessible to South Africa's C income group (Taylor 1996: 58). Unfortunately, the situation in South Africa has not improved much since 1994, and there are still a number of problems in this regard (BDCSA 1997: 130-139).

(iv) Co-operation with the rest of Africa

Since the elections in 1994, PASA has been recognized by the International Publishers Association (Taylor 1996: 42-43). South Africa has also become a member of APNET (cf. § 2.4.2.2 (d)), and South African publishers have started participating in the Zimbabwe Annual Book Fair, with at least 25 publishers attending the fair in 1998 (Machet 1998, personal communication). However, there is still much that South African

publishers can do to strengthen ties with their African counterparts (BDCSA 1997: 140-141; Machet 1998, personal communication).

So far the emphasis has been on the developmental role of the publisher. However, it should be borne in mind that the publishing industry is in the first place a business, “which is notorious for being a high-risk industry with low returns” (Van Rooyen 1994: 7). In South Africa this industry happens to be very small and fragile (BDCSA 1997: 91). It is very important for a publishing house to be profitable, in order to ensure its continued existence. Educational publishers therefore need to juggle educational and business principles, ideally attaining a symbiotic relationship between them (McCallum 1996: 60).

There is ample evidence to suggest that many so-called educational publishers in South Africa have in the past concentrated on promoting their business interests, to the detriment of excellence in education (e.g. Moss 1993: 22; McCallum 1996a: 60; Ntshangase 1996: 51). Such a situation can obviously not be tolerated in the new dispensation. However, for the publishing industry to survive and flourish and ultimately play a role in development in the new South Africa, publishers need to be given the opportunity to become actively involved in the development of new educational material. In fact, Curriculum 2005 cannot be implemented successfully without the involvement of the publishing industry. It is in this regard that the facilitating role of the government becomes important.

#### 5.3.1.2 The role of the government

As is mentioned in Chapter 3 (cf. § 3.2.2.2. (b)), there is a need for cooperation between the publishing industry and the government of the day to ensure successful educational publishing in a country. In a developing country the government can make or break an industry that relies on educational publishing for its continued existence (cf. § 2.4.2.1 (c)). Just prior to the new dispensation, Samuel (1993: 17) acknowledged the importance of a good relationship between the government and educational publishers, and in fact suggested an ongoing “interactive relationship” between the Department of Education and

educational publishers. However, when the situation in the publishing industry since 1994 is investigated it becomes clear that very little of what Samuel envisaged in 1993 has actually materialized.

As is mentioned elsewhere (cf. § 3.2.2.2 (b)), Samuel (1993: 15-19) points out the following factors that relate to the government's role of creating an environment conducive to publishing in the new dispensation: the formulation of a book development policy, the need to draw on the expertise of anti-apartheid publishers, the need to generate a reading culture, the government's relationship with educational publishers, and the need to create an "enabling environment" (Samuel 1993: 18) for educational publishing. The last three factors are most relevant in this study and are therefore briefly discussed here.

(a) Generating a reading culture

According to Samuel (1993: 15), the "imbalance" between educational and general publishing suggests that general publishing should be encouraged alongside educational publishing. Only when there is a wide variety of freely available, relevant material would it be possible to inculcate the habit of reading. The publisher therefore has a key role to play in the development of indigenous reading matter to ensure "that library stocks are not eurocentric in their bias" (Samuel 1993: 16). Samuel also mentions the active encouragement of translation facilities and expertise by the government, to ensure cost-effective publishing in a wide range of South African languages. This would make reading material more accessible to a large sector of the population, and thereby ultimately contribute to the development of a reading culture (Samuel 1993: 19).

The government's concern about publishing in the indigenous South African languages is laudable. However, very little if anything has been done by the government to ensure that the policy of multilingualism is put into practice. Although the language policy in education was described as idealistic right from the start (Altenroxel 1998b), there has been no visible effort to facilitate the implementation of the new policy in South African schools.

(b) Establishing a relationship with educational publishers

According to Samuel, a major role for the new ministry of education and associated agencies would be to decide on the curriculum and syllabi development. He stresses the need for educational policy development to be conducted in a manner that is “transparent and fair” (Samuel 1993: 18), and for the government to make information available to all interest groups in order to “enable the publishing industry to respond fully, on a fair and competitive basis” (Samuel 1993: 17).

Regarding procedural aspects, the government would favour an open and fair system for the submission, evaluation and selection of textbooks, which would require “ongoing consultation between publishers and subject committees, feedback to publishers, the timely provision of information regarding submission deadlines and clear cost-effective procedures” (Samuel 1993: 17). In order to promote indigenous publishing, there is the possibility of giving local publishers the opportunity to publish educational materials before foreign material is imported. The new government would also have to establish target ratios of books to students and decide how much of its budget would be allocated to book provision in the education system.

When the situation since 1994 is considered it is clear that very little of what Samuel envisaged in 1993 was borne out in practice (cf. § 5.3.1.1 (a)). In the first place, there were great delays in the development of the curriculum. Secondly, information regarding the curriculum was not readily made available to publishers. There is furthermore still no clear policy in place regarding the submission, evaluation and selection of textbooks, with very little if any consultation between publishers and educationists (du Toit 1998, personal communication). As regards the allocation of funds for book provision, there has been gross mismanagement in various regional education departments, with money allocated for books being spent on teachers’ salaries (e.g. Prabhakaran 1998).

(c) Creating an enabling environment for educational publishing

Samuel (1993: 18-19) stresses the need to create an environment that facilitates the



developmental role of the publisher and mentions a number of possible measures by government to assist publishers in this regard. He also mentions the crucial importance of finding cost-effective ways of providing books to the entire education system. He points out that if the new government is to carry a major part of the cost of the provision of material in a new education system, “it is essential that long-term financial and budgetary projections are made so that the necessary resources can be allocated for this purpose” (Samuel 1993: 19).

Instead of creating an enabling environment for educational publishing, the government, through the regional education departments, has in fact done quite the opposite. Because of the high level of mismanagement, corruption and inefficiency, in regional departments as well as in the national department (cf. § 5.3.1.1 (a)), the publishing industry has been severely hampered. Therefore, instead of facilitating the developmental role of the publisher, the government has in effect prevented the publishing industry from playing any role in the development of society at large.

The above discussion on the role of the government clearly illustrates the discrepancy between what was ‘promised’ in 1993 and what has actually happened in practice. In many instances, what has happened since 1994 is almost exactly the opposite of what was promised. As a result the publishing industry has been plunged into a crisis.

### 5.3.2 The present situation

The developments in the educational sector described above have led to a severe crisis in the South African publishing industry. Because of the reliance of the industry as a whole on the well-being of the educational sector, in that educational materials have always cross-subsidized other sectors (e.g. Altenroxel 1998a), a collapse in the educational sector will lead to a collapse in the industry as a whole. In April 1998 some publishers already indicated that they faced closure within the following 18 months unless they received satisfactory textbook orders, an unlikely event in the present circumstances. This situation has serious implications, not only for the education system as such, but also for the

general development of South African society at large.

At present (September 1998) the publishing industry is characterized by a major shift in ownership and a move towards conglomeration. Furthermore, a shift in focus from educational publishing (schoolbooks) to tertiary-level publishing is taking place, the second most lucrative sector after the educational sector. The scale of retrenchments is escalating, with publishing houses scaling down other sections in order to concentrate on the tertiary market. Whereas the smaller publishing houses had to bear the brunt of the crisis in 1996 already, the continued existence of the larger companies are now being severely threatened (North 1998, personal communication).

### 5.5 Conclusion

The changes brought about by the new education and language policies create a particular challenge for publishers to become involved in the development of South African society by means of materials development for the new education system. However, for proper development to take place both the publisher and the government need to play a role. Indications are that the government in the form of the Department of Education has seriously neglected its role, thereby effectively forcing the publishing industry into a crisis that threatens its existence.

The present crisis in the publishing industry has serious implications not only for the industry as such, but also for the development of South African society as a whole.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Synopsis

This chapter briefly analyses the present crisis in the publishing industry, comments on the implications of the findings of the study and mentions possible solutions to the problem. The limitations of the study, as well as areas for further research are also pointed out. Since a thorough analysis of the situation falls outside the scope of this study only a few cursory comments are made.

#### 6.1 Introduction

The current crisis in the publishing industry is very alarming and sends out clear warning signals as to the future of education in this country. Because of the interdependence between the education system and the publishing industry, the one cannot thrive without the other, and when the one collapses the other collapses too. The disaster in the education system, which has directly resulted in the crisis in the publishing industry, can to a large extent be blamed on the Department of Education. Ironically, the department has succeeded in thwarting the development of exactly those learners in South Africa who are most in need of development at present in South Africa.

#### 6.2 A brief analysis of the crisis in the publishing industry

The current crisis in the publishing industry can to a large extent be ascribed to three factors, namely a degree of ignorance regarding the nature of the publishing industry in South Africa, an attitude of unwillingness by the Department of Education to facilitate the involvement of the publishing industry in materials development for the new curriculum, and a high degree of inefficiency in the Department of Education.

### 6.2.1 Ignorance regarding the nature of the publishing industry

Samuel (1993: 15), like a number of others (e.g. BDCSA 1997: 83; Holland 1993: 108), points out the ‘imbalance’ between educational and general publishing in South Africa, and suggests that the skewed nature of the industry be rectified by means of active involvement in general publishing, especially also in African languages. Not only would the reliance of the industry on the educational market be diminished in this way, but a contribution would be made to creating a reading public in South Africa.

Samuel’s views seem to be an illustration of what McCallum (1995: 127) terms “worrying signs of simplistic thinking about the nature of the publishing industry as a whole, and its part in the economic, cultural and educational life of the broader society” (cf. also McCallum 1996b: 10).

Although the South African publishing industry is strong and flourishing compared to the rest of Africa (BDCSA 1997: 83), the turnover of the industry is a mere 32% the size of one large company, Pick ‘n Pay, which suggests how fragile the industry actually is (BDCSA 1997: 91).

Like in any other developing country, the publishing industry in South Africa relies heavily on the educational market to subsidize general publication, which is not a profitable endeavour in a society where only 5% of the nation buy books (Kantey 1991: 103). To encourage general publishing, unprofitable as it is, when there is no reading public in South Africa, suggests a degree of ignorance of good business principles. No sound business will venture into an area where there is no ready market.

Publishers should rather be encouraged to become even more actively involved in the development of excellent educational material so that the new curriculum can be successfully implemented and the development process accelerated as a result. Only through good education, which incorporates the principles of lifelong learning, will a reading public be created in South Africa. However, this will be a long process. Research has shown that teaching children to read does not help to create a culture of reading if

that culture is not sustained outside the formal educational sphere (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin 1990: 158). The education system therefore needs to create information literate people so that learners will continue reading outside the formal education sphere and in this manner gradually help create a culture of reading and ultimately a larger reading public in South Africa.

Thus, ironically, by supporting the expansion of the educational market, the government would in fact be supporting the expansion of the general market. Not only general publishing will be encouraged in this way, but also academic (i.e. tertiary) publishing, as well as some of the borderline areas such as indigenous fiction, adult basic education material, and works of scholarship (McCallum 1996b: 10).

#### 6.2.2 Unwillingness to facilitate publishers' involvement in materials development

As is mentioned in Chapter 3 (cf. § 3.2.2.2 (b)), the paper read by John Samuel of the ANC in 1993 at the conference on Publishing for Democratic Education, is a good indication of the sentiments within the ANC regarding the future role of the publishing industry in a 'new' South Africa. Although Samuel states that the new government is in favour of an independent publishing industry, his paper strongly suggests that the government would intervene should publishers not bide by the 'rules' of the new government, namely to "commit themselves *visibly* [author's emphasis] to the development of a local flourishing industry ... which reflects the *composition* [author's emphasis], needs and concerns of all South Africa's people" (Samuel 1993: 10). Furthermore, "rapid progress" (Samuel 1993: 10) in this regard is expected.

The sentiments expressed here are in line with the new government's RDP, which has as one of its five key programmes the development of human resources (CSIR 1996: 1). The issue of human resource development also features prominently in various government publications of 1994 and shortly thereafter, and particular emphasis is placed on redressing the imbalances of the past (e.g. DE 1995: Ch. 3). This implies *inter alia* an active pursuit of the policy of affirmative action (cf. also Cachalia 1993), which in practice

has meant the replacing of previously privileged persons [read ‘whites’] with previously disadvantaged persons [read ‘blacks’], as has rapidly been happening in all sectors of South African society since 1994.

Samuel’s comment above indicates an unwillingness on the part of the government to facilitate the active involvement of the industry in materials development, unless certain conditions are met, these conditions being politically rather than educationally motivated. It seems as though the powers that be want to force the publishing industry to comply with *their* rules of the game. Although the government acknowledges that the publishing industry has an important role to play in education, this role seems to be dependent on how well the industry “chooses to organise itself to play [a] broader, more developmental role” (Samuel 1993: 13), which translates into the forming of a Book Development Council, the development and training of black staff, the absence of privileges for certain publishers who support the ideologies of the government, and increased black ownership within the publishing industry (Samuel 1993: 13-14).

What the above implies is that the transformation of the industry as envisaged by the new government is regarded as of more importance than the actual involvement in materials development. In fact, Samuel states that in order to achieve the situation where every child has access to at least one book per subject “it will be necessary for the industry to align itself with the key concerns and priorities of a new ministry of education and training, and whatever curriculum development bodies it sets up” (Samuel 1993: 14), thereby placing the onus on the industry to ensure its future role in materials development. These sentiments are underscored by the BDCSA (1997: 107-108), which focuses to a large extent on the input expected of the industry to ensure cooperation with government, the organized teaching profession and the higher education sector, as well as the need for the industry to demonstrate clearly how and by when it intends addressing the weaknesses constraining its ability to transform.

It can therefore be argued that although in 1993 the government was claiming to be supporting the idea of involvement by the publishing industry in the development of new

material for a new education system, and was in fact committing itself to playing a constructive role in this regard (cf. § 3.2.2.2(b)), this was merely lip service to the industry. The happenings in the educational sector since 1994 bear out this view. As is mentioned in Chapter 5 (cf. § 5.3.1.1(a)), there was an observed reluctance on the part of the Department of Education to communicate with the industry. Furthermore, there was a constant ‘clash’ between education departments and publishers regarding the issue of private *versus* state involvement in educational publishing. Even though the Department of Education constantly denied it, there were clear indications of the intentions by regional departments to develop and provide material themselves. In fact, the central department did in the end intervene and provide material for the first term of 1998.

### 6.2.3 Inefficiency of the Department of Education

As is mentioned in Chapter 5 (cf. § 5.3.1.1 (a) (I)), budget constraints and the government’s macro-economic policy (GEAR) have been cited as reasons for the textbook disaster in education. To an extent these are valid reasons. For instance, in 1996, the Department of Education had to slash its budget for textbooks with 42% in compliance with the principles of GEAR (Mulume 1998). However, in his handling of the strike by the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) in June 1998, the Minister of Education, Prof. S Bengu, acted directly in opposition to the principles of GEAR. Instead of continuing with the plan to curb spending by regional departments (who were spending 90% of their budget on salaries) through the retrenchment of thousands of temporary teachers, many of them poorly qualified, he reached an agreement whereby virtually no retrenchments would take place (Pretorius 1998a; Kobokoane 1998). Although retrenchment is a drastic measure, which causes much trauma for the person who is retrenched, the fact of the matter is that “South Africa will have to live with an imperfect system that is bereft of classrooms, books, toilets and electricity, but flooded with incompetent teachers” (Kobokoane 1998).

What is disturbing about the financial crisis in the education Department of Education is that for four years running the education sector has received the largest slice of the

national budget, which in 1998 amounted to R45-billion (Pretorius 1998a; Kobokoane 1998), one of the world's largest proportions of GNP spent on education (Mulholland 1998). This suggests a high degree of inefficiency and mismanagement within the education system in South Africa.

That this is indeed the case has in fact already been established by a 15-member audit team led by the Director-General of the Public Service and Administration Department, who visited the provinces between October 1996 and May 1997. They released reports in September 1997 which indicate that "provincial education is frequently beset by incompetence, confusion and political intrigue" (Duffy 1997). There are numerous further newspaper reports (e.g. Altenroxel 1998d; Pretorius 1998a; Ratshitanga 1998) which suggest that inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption are rife in the regional departments of education.

This study argues that both the publishing industry and the government have a role to play in order to ensure the successful involvement of the publishing industry in materials development for the new curriculum. In educational publishing in South Africa there is an interdependence between the industry and the government in that there can be no constructive involvement by the industry in the absence of good communication channels and other structures that facilitate the involvement of the industry. On the other hand, there can be no fruitful implementation of educational policy without well-developed educational material.

Unfortunately, because of the factors mentioned above, the new government of South Africa has not played its facilitating role, thereby effectively preventing the publishing industry from playing its developmental role. In the process, not only the publishing industry but also the education system has been severely affected. The present situation has grave implications for the development of South African society, in the short term but especially also in the long term.



### 6.3 The implications of the present crisis for South African society

As is described in Chapter 5 (cf. § 5.3), the publishing industry is facing a severe crisis that threatens the future existence of the industry. Already many people formerly active in the industry have been laid off, and the trend is escalating. The industry has therefore in effect been brought onto its knees. This situation has far-reaching consequences and serious implications, not only for the industry as such, but also for the whole of South African society.

In the first place, there has been and still is large-scale retrenchment within the publishing industry, which in 1997 employed between 2 000 and 3 000 people (BDCSA 1997: 12). Because of the reliance on educational publishing, the other less profitable and unprofitable sectors have been forced to scale down and even close down. In some cases even profitable sections of publishing houses have been scaled down in an effort to streamline the business (North 1998, personal communication). However, not only publishing houses have been affected, but also printers, paper manufacturers and book sellers. Furthermore, a diversity of freelance workers, such as editors, designers and illustrators (BDCSA 1997: 12-13), have also necessarily been affected.

The scale of retrenchment mentioned here is disastrous, in the light of the economic situation in South Africa, with the confidence index released by the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) early in September showing a 12-year low (Bullard 1998). As Johann Rupert (*Sunday Times Online* 30 August 1998) states: “The only people who create jobs are entrepreneurs. They are the yeast of society. But they need an enabling environment in which to operate.” (*ibid.*). Because of the crisis in education, the publishing industry has not only lost jobs, but has also lost the ability to create jobs, and so contribute to economic growth and upliftment in society.

A second serious implication of the current crisis is that no proper education will take place in the country, which has serious consequences for the development and enhancement of South Africa’s human capital, which directly contributes to the

intellectual capital of society. Because of the interdependence of the education system and the publishing industry, the crisis in education has resulted in the publishing crisis, which in turn perpetuates the crisis in education due to the fact that no education system can function adequately without good quality textbooks and other educational material.

Besides the obvious consequences of the educational crisis, namely an increase in the number of illiterate and educationally disadvantaged people in the country, there is the added disadvantage that very few learners will develop into information literate people with the necessary attitude, knowledge and skills to deal with the demands of the information age. As Rupert asks about South Africa's learners: "How will they compete in an information-era where nearly half their US counterparts are wired to the Internet?" (*Sunday Times Online* 30 August 1998). Even though Curriculum 2005 is flawed in that it seems to apply a very narrow interpretation to the concept of lifelong learning (Behrens 1995), the new curriculum does strive towards a new approach to learning and teaching, which when applied successfully, will facilitate the development of a degree of information literacy among learners.

A further consequence of poor primary and secondary education is that few learners progress into tertiary education. As it is, only one in three learners in South Africa obtain a secondary school pass, and more shockingly, 29% of teachers have not passed matric (Mulume 1998). Of the learners who do enter tertiary education, a large number lack the necessary skills to cope with the demands of higher education (DE 1997a: Ch.2, § 2.30, 2.32). In particular, they lack the characteristic features of lifelong learners (Behrens 1995: 258). What is particularly alarming, given the dominance of the written word in the information age today, is the lack of reading skills among black students especially (Pretorius *in press*). Quoting Grabe (1991), Pretorius (*in press*) points out that education exists today within the context of "massive amounts of print information" and access to this information is obtained primarily through reading.

A decrease in the number of learners who complete tertiary education leads to a decrease in the number of skilled people in society, especially people with critical thinking skills,

which in turn has a negative influence on the intellectual capital contained in a society. Given the importance of critical thinking skills for sustainable development in a society (cf. § 1.5.3, § 4.2), it follows that a decrease in the number of people with a tertiary education in a society will eventually lead to an inability to sustain development in that society. This matter is particularly relevant in South Africa today, in the light of the fact that almost 22 000 of the country's most highly skilled people are living abroad, and this figure refers only to those who have a contactable address (Kaplan & Meyer 1998: 18). Furthermore, an alarming 74% of skilled people still remaining in South Africa are considering leaving the country (Gill 1998).

A further, even more serious implication of a decrease in the number of people involved in tertiary education, especially university education, is a decrease in scholarly research and publication, universities being the major institutions of scientific research in most countries (Altbach 1989: 12), and scholarly publications being the major means by which new knowledge is disseminated. In the information age with its concomitant information explosion new knowledge is created every day, especially in the developed world. Given the interdependence of societies in the world today, as a result of globalization, no society can afford not to keep up with new developments in fields relevant to them. It follows therefore that scholarly research needs to be produced on a continuous basis in order to provide the knowledge needed to design relevant, up-to-date teaching programmes and to contribute to the global body of knowledge. The importance of scholarly research in developing societies becomes particularly evident when it is placed in the context of the international knowledge system (cf. § 1.5.3.2).

As is mentioned in Chapter 1 (cf. § 1.5.4.1), scholarly research and publication in South Africa compare well with other developing countries (Aina & Mabawonku 1996: 73; DE 1995: Ch. 3, § 7; Gibbs 1995: 76). However, "there is insufficient research capacity in higher education, and existing capacity is ... not adequately linked to postgraduate studies" (DE 1997a: 22), which suggests that the quality of not only research, but also postgraduate teaching programmes in South Africa is not what it should be. This view is supported by an independent study of South Africa's 36 universities and technikons that

warns of “devalued degrees, growing chaos and mediocrity” (Pretorius 1998d).

The need for generating knowledge through both basic and applied research is stressed repeatedly in relevant government publications (e.g. DACST 1996: § 2.7, 3.1-3.2; DE 1997a: 21-23). As it is, there is therefore a serious need for research in South Africa that will contribute to a body of indigenous knowledge that could be used to solve South Africa’s problems, and this need will only grow in future. While there were 45 A-rated scientists in South Africa in 1997 (Barron 1997: 13), there are only 14 left (*Sunday Times* 19 April 1998). Given the fact that so many skilled people have left and are planning to leave the country, this situation could only deteriorate.

From the above discussion it is clear that the current crisis in the publishing has implications that are more far-reaching than many people, including those who have effectively brought it about, might realize. If something drastic is not done, the level of development in South African society is doomed to be lowered, and South Africa will move further and further away from the centre of the international knowledge system, which will make it increasingly dependent on the major creators and disseminators of knowledge in the international knowledge system.

In the light of the potential role that South Africa can play in materializing the dream of an African renaissance, this situation has grave implications for the whole of the African continent. It has already been pointed out that the idea of an African renaissance “is in danger of suffering the same fate as the RDP” (Hartley 1998). In order to be of any value, the African renaissance needs to “usher in ... a flourishing of ideas and expression.” (*ibid.*), which at present is clearly not happening (*ibid.*). The need for an education system that encourages the development of critical thinking skills in learners is therefore vitally important for South African society.

The preceding discussion clearly illustrates the need for drastic measures to correct the current situation. However, given the complexity of the situation, this is no easy task.

#### 6.4 Possible solutions

As is described above, three main reasons for the present crisis in the publishing industry can be forwarded, namely, ignorance regarding the nature of the publishing industry, an unwillingness on the part of the government to facilitate the role of the publisher, and gross inefficiency and mismanagement in the Department of Education. It follows therefore that these three issues need to be addressed first. While the first two could be addressed largely by means of closer cooperation between the Department of Education and the publishing industry, the third will require more drastic measures. Effort from both the industry and government is required in order to address these problems.

In order to bring about closer cooperation between the publishing industry and the Department of Education, there will have to be a concerted effort from both the industry and the department to bury the hatchet and concentrate on the issue at stake, namely the proper education of South Africa's learners.

From the industry's side this would require an acknowledgement that the deep-rooted suspicion and mistrust among many government officials and teachers are justified. In the first place, there has been an immense degree of corruption in the educational sector, with publishers who supported the previous government's apartheid policies being favoured to the detriment of others who did not support those policies (e.g. Machet 1993; Moss 1993; Oliphant 1993; Samuel 1993).

Far more serious though was the publishing industry's role in the 'impoverishment' of all South Africa's people through draconian censorship laws, not only in terms of the general lack of access to information that was regarded by the government as 'sensitive' or 'harmful' or 'instigating', but specifically also through an education system whose ideologies of Christian National Education and Bantu Education severely impeded the development of the majority of South Africa's learners. By supporting these ideologies through the development of material used to implement the educational policy, some publishers have directly contributed to the disadvantaged position of many people in

South Africa today. In the light of the history of education and educational publishing, the publishing industry needs to visibly demonstrate its sincere intentions to help rectify the inherited imbalances of the past, in whichever manner is deemed necessary.

On the other hand, education officials and teachers who have been disadvantaged in the past need to acknowledge that the imbalances in South African society cannot be rectified overnight. Forcing the industry to change overnight is therefore counter-productive, as is preventing publishers from having a stake in the education system, since the learners who suffer most from a collapse in the education system are exactly those who need development most, namely black children in the poorer rural and township schools (Pretorius 1998a).

The third problem mentioned above, namely the inefficiency of the Department of Education will need harsh measures from the government's side, particularly the Minister of Education. In the first place, there will have to be an adherence to the principles of GEAR, which has as one of its targets the "careful management of the overall government wage bill" (Kobokoane 1998). Although retrenchment is a drastic measure and a harsh way of dealing with the problem, this might be the only solution to decrease the amount spent on teachers' salaries in the provinces. However, although rationalizing teachers' numbers will enable provinces to buy textbooks, the resultant increase in the teacher - learner ratio will work directly against the effective implementation of Curriculum 2005, in that an OBE system necessitates a low teacher - learner ratio so that learners can receive sufficient individual attention. Nevertheless a system with crowded classrooms but textbooks should still provide better education than fewer children per class, but no proper classrooms and no textbooks.

Another measure would be to reconsider the autonomy given to provinces through the Education Policy Act. As is pointed out by Pretorius (1998a), for the past two years money for schooling came from the total annual budgets granted to individual provinces, which meant that "central government set policy and laid down standards but had no say over how the provinces divided up their budgets" (cf. also McCallum 1996b). This lack of

central control enabled the provincial departments to use the budget for textbooks to pay teachers' salaries (cf. § 5.3.1.2 (b)). As is pointed out in Chapter 5, the result has been disastrous.

A further point relates to the need for a change in attitude and behaviour of teachers on grassroots level. In a speech delivered at the fourth national congress of SADTU, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki lambasts those teachers of South Africa who have tarnished the image of the teaching profession and points out the need for a change of heart among black teachers especially, so that they concentrate on the education of the learners of South Africa, instead of focusing on short-term selfish ambitions (Mbeki 1998). This point is most important, since no curriculum, no matter how well-developed, will have any effect in the absence of well-qualified and dedicated teachers who have the development of South Africa's learners at heart.

The suggested solutions described here might prove to be too idealistic given the realities of South African society, with the albatross of the previous apartheid policies round its neck. In the first place, a sudden 'change of heart' by publishers who have in the past contributed greatly to the entrenchment of apartheid is hardly convincing and will not have the desired effect (cf. also Moss 1993). The degree of hatred, suspicion and mistrust built up over more than forty years of apartheid cannot be wiped out overnight, and it is unrealistic to expect it.

It will therefore be very difficult for publishers to change their inherited 'tainted' image. Furthermore, the transformation of the teaching profession, the prestige of which "is fast disappearing" (Mbeki 1998), will be a long and tiresome process. Drastic measures by the government could potentially evoke fierce reaction from teachers, as was illustrated by the strike of SADTU members earlier this year (e.g. Pretorius 1998a). Changing teachers' attitudes, behaviour and competence can also not happen overnight.

There is therefore a strong possibility that the current situation will merely deteriorate in future, with disastrous effects for not only education, but the whole development process.

## 6.5 Limitations of the study

As is mentioned at the outset (cf. § 1.3), this study is a literature study that touches on a number of fields. Because of the nature of the study, which in the first place is more descriptive than analytical, and in the second place has a very wide scope, the discussion of issues in the study has necessarily been largely cursory. A more extensive study would have included in-depth analyses of the issues, namely, the transformation of the education system in South Africa, the apparent lack of serious efforts by government to develop the indigenous languages, the dire need for well-developed educational material, and the developments since 1994 that have directly contributed to the crisis in the publishing industry. A more extensive study would also have investigated attempts by the industry itself in the development of the publishing industry as such. Furthermore, a thorough investigation of the factors underlying the current crisis, as well as practical possible solutions would have been included.

## 6.6 Areas for further research

In this study a number of areas are touched on but not investigated in depth. In order to help build a body of knowledge in South Africa, on publishing as such but also on related matters that are of particular relevance from an information science perspective, it is suggested that further research be conducted on a number of issues:

- A thorough investigation of the principles underlying the new education and training system in South Africa, from adult basic education to higher education, is needed, with reference to the issue of information literacy and the principles of lifelong learning. South Africa desperately needs information literate people to contribute towards the development of society, particularly with regard to the demands of the information age today. It is therefore crucially important that the education and training system prepare learners so that they can survive and flourish in an environment where they are bombarded with information on a daily basis.



- The matters of language planning and development have been dealt with in considerable detail by the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG), and mention has been made of the practical problems experienced by publishers in the development of publications in the indigenous African languages. Further research in this area could contribute to finding practical solutions that could facilitate the creation of products in these languages, especially in the field of adult basic education.
- The importance of the creation of suitable educational material to instill the principles of lifelong learning cannot be overemphasized. While some research has been done in this area, the focus has been largely on material used in highly developed societies. Extensive research is needed to establish the criteria that educational material in South Africa should meet in order to bring about successful OBE in this multicultural developing society on the African continent.
- A matter that needs particular attention in the development of educational material in South Africa is that of the accessibility of the language used in textbooks, specifically with regard to ESL learners. Various researchers, mostly in the field of applied linguistics, have pointed out the extreme unsuitability of educational material used at present. Although some publishers seem to be aware of the need for applied linguistic input in the development process, there still seems to be lack of awareness as to what this should entail in practice. Research is needed on the training of textbook writers and the cooperation between publishers and applied linguists in this regard.
- The developments since 1994 that have contributed to the present crisis in the publishing industry have been cursorily discussed in the present study. A thorough investigation of the situation should throw more light on the practical problems experienced by both the industry and the Department of Education in this regard, and an in-depth analysis of the factors underlying the tension between publishers and educationists could provide practical suggestions regarding the manner in

which to address the problem.

- More theoretical research on the role of the publisher as an information intermediary within the context of the information age could provide a sound basis for further applied research on the practical aspects of this role of the publisher, with specific reference to the involvement of the publisher in the information life cycle.
- A matter which was merely mentioned in the present study is that of the role of technology in the information age and the impact it has on the publishing industry. Not only is more research necessary on the influence of electronic publishing on traditional book publishing, but more attention could be given to the role of technology in facilitating traditional book publishing, in the context of the huge divide between the developed and the developing sectors of South African society.

## 6.7 Conclusion

The information age, with its concomitant 'explosion' of information necessitates the ability to deal with information adequately in order to survive and thrive in an information-rich environment. What is necessary for a society is for its members to develop the necessary information literacy skills, not only to cope with everyday needs, but also to contribute to their own development as well as that of others. What is crucially important is the fostering of critical thinking skills, which facilitate lifelong learning and ultimately bring about the transformation of a society into an information society. In this way the intellectual capital of the society is increased.

Although South Africa is one of the most developed societies on the African continent, it faces critical problems at present, such as widespread illiteracy, underdevelopment, high unemployment with the concomitant problems of poverty, crime, and many forms of abuse. It is furthermore characterized by low productivity and an emerging economy that needs to compete on the world market after years of isolation. Clearly, there is a dire need

for information literate people who have the ability to create knowledge that can be utilized to the benefit and upliftment of society as a whole. The principal means by which this can be brought about is the education and training system, the major utilizer and creator of knowledge in any society.

However, to a large extent because of the history of apartheid, a situation has developed where education in South Africa seems to be doomed to failure. The crisis in both the educational sector and the publishing industry is a major tragedy for development efforts in South Africa. Without a proper functioning education system, there can be no hope of improving the desperate situation in South Africa, where the majority of people are functionally illiterate, let alone information literate. Without the proper implementation of Curriculum 2005, which at least embodies some of the principles of lifelong learning, there is but a very slim possibility of creating information literate learners that can ultimately contribute to the development of all South Africa's people, especially those who have been the most disadvantaged in the past. This is an extremely sad and depressing situation, and unless both the publishing industry and the Department of Education put in some serious effort to rectify the matter, the development effort in South Africa can best be described in the (adapted) words of Pretorius (1998a): "Development is back to square zero".

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