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# **Call Us by Our Names: The Need to Establish Authority Control Standards for Non-Roman Names**

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## **Abstract**

Cataloguing cannot exist without standardised access points, and authority control is the mechanism by which we achieve the necessary degree of standardisation, thus enhances the accessibility of library resources by controlling the access points, improving users' ability to efficiently find the works most relevant to their information search. The paper seeks to understand authority control standards and how non-Roman names are catered for in those standards. The study used desk research. Findings indicated the lack of authority control standards for non-Roman names. The study recommended the establishment of authority control standards for non-Roman names, cataloguers should consult the authors/creators when recording the preferred forms for their names. The system should also be upgraded to adopt non-Roman characters and linguistics.

**Keywords:** Authority control, Authority control standards, Information retrieval, Name authority, non-roman names

## **Introduction and Background**

Authority Control is the process of maintaining consistency in a bibliographic file or catalogue through reference to an authority file (Taylor, 1984). The purpose of authority control, according to Tillet (1989), is to ensure that the works of a creator/author are grouped together. The cataloguer needs to determine whether the name has been used before in the catalogue, verify that the name has been established correctly, and adjust if required. The same form must be used throughout the catalogue using the standardized tools, to ensure consistency. Gorman (2004) asserts that bibliographic control and authority control are two sides of the same coin, with bibliographic control being literally impossible without authority control. "Cataloguing deals with order, logic, objectivity, precise denotation, and consistency, and must have mechanisms to ensure these attributes. The same name, title or subject should always have the same denotation each time it occurs in a bibliographic record" (Gorman, 2004). Wiederhold and Reeve (2021) indicated that in the process of cataloguing and creating authority record for an information resource, the cataloguer should choose the access points, guided by the standards to uniquely identify the resource and to collocate related resources. Access points represent a unique entity and are recorded

in authority records. Authority records are stored and maintained within an authority database or authority file. If an authority record for a chosen entity exists in an authority database, the cataloguer can re-use the authorized access point from the authority record. If an authority record for the entity does not exist in the authority database, the cataloguer can add a new authority record to the file, whether by creating a new record or downloading an existing authority record from an external source. Taylor (1984) defines authority control as the process of maintaining consistency in a bibliographic file or catalogue through reference to an authority file. The cataloguer needs to determine whether the name has been used before in the catalogue, verify that the name has been established correctly, and adjust if required. The same form must be used throughout the catalogue to ensure consistency. If the name to be used for the heading cannot be traced in the catalogue, the cataloguer is required to establish the form of the name to be used as a heading following cataloguing standards. Authority work is an important process that allows for the disambiguation of subjects and names in order to provide consistent, accurate access points in the discovery systems (Carlstone, 2021). Access points are the possible ways a user might search for a material. Keenan and Johnston (2000) define access points as the heading in an index, catalogue or database, which is used to identify specific records or entries in a file such as creators' names, subject terms, title, keywords, international standard number and classification code. These are also called entry points and they are usually used on the catalogues as headings (main or added headings). Access points aids retrieval of information sources, the correct and consistent access points is an advantage in grouping the works of the same author in the catalogue.

Furthermore, Wiederhold and Reeve (2021) asserted that, following good authority control practice, cataloguers assign one consistent form of a name, title, or subject to bring together all related items in a library catalogue, which helps users by reducing the amount of work they must do to think of all the possible ways the object of their search might be represented. Wells (2001:2) asserted that, "authority control can be regarded as a traffic-direction system, gathering information under authorized headings and steering patrons away from dead-end searches". Library patrons of today expect seamless information retrieval and sophisticated database navigation. Correct application of authority control best practices assists cataloguers in meeting these needs, while connecting users to the most relevant resources for their information search (Wiederhold and Reeve, 2021). The importance of authority control lies in its ability to support users' information retrieval needs through the establishment and maintenance of consistent, reliable, and unique access points. This brings precision to searches and collocates related materials in results lists such as in pearl growing searches. The structure of authority records with cross references and hierarchically related access points collocates works on the same topic and improves navigation between related concepts. Through the use of access points, it also allows for linking between library resources and other tools, especially online. Users benefit from the predictability of consistent naming and more precise results. Cataloguers also benefit from the consistent application of authority control practices within the catalogue. Whenever an item needs to be added to the catalogue that has the same

author as another work already catalogued, the time spent describing the new item by the cataloguer is decreased if the name has already been established in the library's authority file. However, the literature seems to prove that authority control is one of the processes of cataloguing that seems to be neglected by many cataloguers (Maphopha, 2000; Monyela, 2019; Marais, 2004; Marais, 2018, Xia and Liu (2018).

## **Problem Statement**

The international cataloguing standards do not adequately meet the needs for cataloguing of non-roman materials. The diversity and linguistic syntax of non-Roman languages such as African languages, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, Greek, Cyrillic to name a few, makes the cataloguing of materials difficult. The Arabic language for example, has unique characteristics that are not widely used in Roman scripts. Those languages pose problems to cataloguers because they are not modelled on an alphabetical system and Roman numbering or scripting system. For example, Mutula and Tsvakai (2002) found that African names suffers from a lack of bibliographic tools, that could help standardize their diversity. Other problems that make standardization of names important but difficult are the fact that African naming schemes are so complex. "African personal names," according to Bein (1993,97), "are as profuse, rich, and varied as African languages." For example, a first name in certain ethnic groups may be a surname in another. The problems of classification and cataloguing African materials are intensified by the fact that some names have certain meanings attached to them relating to events, people, spirits, or places; and providing an equivalent English word would be difficult. In Setswana, Sepedi IsiZulu for example, one English word may require a phrase or even a sentence when translated. The direct interpretation of a given word in any language may result in inaccuracies leading to difficulties in accessing the information needed. Cataloguing and classifying African materials suffer from the lack of name and subject authority tools, especially considering the fact that many names in Africa can be very common with variant forms (Mutula and Tsvakai, 2002). There is also great variation in names of people from one country to another or even within the same country. In Kenya and South Africa, for example, names like Tina, Daina, Dina and Diana are variants of the name Dinah. Again, the name of the late Kenyan former president, Daniel Arap Moi have variant forms depending on the part of Kenya one comes from. In Western Kenya this name would be Daniel Moi, nd in Central Province the name is Daniel Wa Moi while in Nyanza Province he was called Daniel K'Moi (Mutula and Tsvakai. 2002). These variations of the same name causes headaches for even the most experienced and professional cataloguers. Filing such variations in names can be varied, should the surname of the late former Kenyan President Moi be filed as Moi or Arap Moi (Arap means son of) or Wa Moi or K'Moi since there are no standards on how to file such names. In the LC Name Authority File (LCNAF) the preferred form of the name is (Moi, Daniel Arap, 1924-) and the variants are: Moi, D. T. Arap, 1924-; Moi, D. T. Arap (Daniel Torotich Arap), 1924-; Moi, Daniel Torotich Arap, 1924-; Moi, Daniel, 1924-; Moi, Daniel T. Arap (Daniel Torotich Arap), 1924-.The sources consulted when recording the name were his statement on application of the new Immigration act in relation.1968.;Int.yrbk.&statesmen'sWW,1981etc.(LCNAF) It looks like he, his family

or his country of origin was never consulted to interpret his name because none was indicated on the sources. He died on 4 February 2020, however the date of death is not indicated.

## **Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To explore authority control standards used in cataloguing
- To find out challenges of cataloguing non roman names

## **Scope**

Authority control is divided into various entities such as people, places, corporate bodies, families, uniform titles, series, works, expression, subjects, genres, event. Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) describes the data elements as personal name, corporate name, meeting name, uniform title, geographic name. The study will focus on personal names, because those names have important meaning and interpretation to the natives. Roman languages in the context of this paper refers to the modern languages such as the English language.

## **Literature Review**

Literature review was obtained from books, journals, theses, conference proceedings, databases, electronic resources.

## **Authority control standards**

The Descriptive Cataloguing Manual (DCM) Z1, Resource Description and Access (RDA) and the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines Supplement to the MARC 21 Format for Authority Data are manuals made available by LC to guide cataloguers in creating and maintaining name and series authority records. LC Subject Headings/ LCSH manual is another resource maintained by LC detailing standards for creating and using subject authority records. These standards and manuals guide cataloguers to create authority records for the following entities: personal names, families, corporate bodies, places, works, expressions, series, and subjects. For example, the DCM Z1 instructions address the creation and update of name and series authority records (NARs and SARs). Use them in connection with RDA, Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloguing Policy Statements (LC-PCC PS), and other sections of the DCM. These instructions supplement the MARC 21 Format for Authority Data and generally do not repeat information found in the format (ITS MARC. com). Again, there are few chapters devoted to the creation of authorized access points. In RDA these are referred to as the “preferred name”. In RDA, one records a number of “attributes” of a person. Following is a list of the attributes one can record in an RDA personal name authority record: Name of the person; Date associated with the person; Title of the person; Fuller form of name; Other designation associated with the person; Gender; Place of birth; Place of death; Country associated with the person; Place of

residence; Address of the person; Affiliation; Language of the person; Field of activity of the person; Profession or occupation; Biographical information; Identifier for the person. The list is quite long a cataloguer may not have all of the information readily available. However, if some of this information is available on the piece, and the cataloguer is authorized to create RDA preferred names, this information can be, and most likely, will be encoded into future personal name authority records (RDA toolkit). According to Wiederhold and Reeve (2021) an authority record constructed following these standards consists of five major components (the authorized access point, variant access points, related access points, associated attributes describing the entity, and source information). The authorized access point is the preferred form for referring to an entity. RDA guides the cataloguer in determining the preferred name or title for the entity based on the information resource being described. For example, the authorized access point for the works by an American singer, songwriter and dancer “king of pop” Michael Jackson could be established as “Jackson, Michael, 1958-2009” rather than “Michael Jackson”; “Michael Joseph Jackson” or any other form or variation that could be used. However, non-roman names may have different preferences according to the meaning and origin of the names. On the other hand, if an entity can be identified by more than one form, variant access points can be recorded. These access points guide library users to the authorized access points in search and retrieval. RDA provides instruction for when and how to record variant access points for the various authority entity types. Moreover, each entity represented by their authorized access point can have relationships with other entities and their authorized access points. Guidelines in RDA help cataloguers determine when and how to record these relationships. Hence there is a need for guidelines aimed at recording non-roman names authorized access points, variant access points and related access points.

### **Challenges of cataloguing non- roman names**

Monyela (2019) found challenges and difficulties of assigning subject headings for foreign and non-Roman names and languages. El-Sherbini and Chen (2011)’s study of an assessment of the need to provide non-Roman subject access to the Library online catalogue, also found that cataloguers were experiencing problems in finding English equivalents for non-Roman subject terms in the LCSH. In Malaysia, a study done by Ismail and Roni (2011) found that the major challenges faced by cataloguers in cataloguing foreign languages such as Arabic books were due to the Arabic scripts themselves. It was difficult to vocalise Arabic words due to the different ways of reading the various types of calligraphy and typography. In addition, lengthy author’s names, vocalisation of names, Arabisation of English names and many authors of a book were among the challenges faced by the cataloguers. Some of the integrated library systems could not adopt Arabic characters and another problem was the difficulty to determine the subject headings for Arabic books as the new Arabic terms were not available in the LCSH. Another study by Olson and Schlegl (2013) also revealed bias in subject access standards to other languages. The study opposed the notion of “one size fits all” subject access in the LCSH and notations in the classification schemes by the ALA 1998 annual conference. Olson and Schlegl (2013) study discovered the “omission from the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), the Library of Congress

Classification (LCC) and the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) of African independent churches that embrace Christianity and African tradition, while rejecting foreign elements. Furthermore, classification of African languages and people in the ways they are grouped, poor allocation of space to African cultures compared to European and North American cultures, and inappropriate mechanisms of division by languages resulted in Olson and Schlegl realising that these syndetic structures may fail to connect appropriate topics and that there are limitations in the construction of subject heading strings. The afore mentioned may transfer the challenges of access to users on the OPAC". A study by Mutula and Tsvakai (2002) also found that the difficulties of diverse languages present great challenges for cataloguers, especially because the international cataloguing tools did not adequately meet the needs for cataloguing of African materials. The diversity of African languages and linguistic syntax makes the cataloguing of African materials difficult. Some challenges as indicated by (UK Essays, 2018) would be the cost associated with getting librarians familiarized with learning the types of calligraphy as well as knowing the books' names, titles, statements of publications, and the scripts of the non-Roman books due to the differences from the English versions of book materials. Lau and Wang (1991) observed that, the increasing availability of Chinese language materials and other materials of Chinese authorship in North American libraries were posing major complications for cataloguing which led to retrieval problems. These complications included: the intricate nature of the Chinese script along with the extensive use of the traditional and simplified Chinese characters, and the application of variant Romanization schemes including Pinyin. The study proposed solutions to improve access to Chinese language materials such as providing more access points in Pinyin form, establishing standards for international practice in Romanising Chinese personal names and in publishing the order of the family and given names of all authors, and linking cataloguing authority files with OPACs. Lin (1998) also observed that, Chinese names have long been a problem for technical processing, cataloguing, and bibliographic searching in the libraries. Comparing AACRI and AACR2, each took a different approach in dealing with Chinese names containing a non-Chinese given name. Cataloguers have struggled with the problem and have not always been successful.

El-Sherbini and Chen (2011) also found that, when it comes to subject searching, the cataloguing standards provide access only to controlled English-language subject headings and thesauri, such as the LCSH. In much of the cataloguing for items in languages not written in Roman script, English-language subject access provides neither a sufficient description of the content nor can it ensure the retrieval of the item. When there is no English equivalent, an English subject headings system provides transliteration (or Romanization) of the native scripts. However, the transliteration scheme may not be the same the user employs at time of search. There are also concepts in non-Roman languages that are difficult to find in English and in this case cataloguers would select a controlled vocabulary subject heading that is "close enough." On the other hand, a user who is searching for a book written in certain language about a certain subject should be able to conduct a subject search in that

language if that is preferred. Several authors addressed the limited effectiveness of Romanization in providing access to non-Roman script materials or languages. For example, Agenbroad (2006) offered an extensive historical overview of Romanization in library catalogues. He indicated that institutional policies and cataloguing standards were not technical feasibility, as the major obstacles to implementing non-Roman script access points. He provided two suggestions: expand the Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) character repertoire and add rules to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2) or any standard used to allow non-Roman script access points. Aliprand (2005) also observed that Romanization is inadequate for providing access to materials in non-Roman scripts. She described Romanization as “information distortion” and pointed to the need for “locale-specific” access points, determined by the user’s preferred language and written in the proper script. She also advised that authority files should present multiple script access points. Lammert (2019) observed that, many libraries do not have a dedicated employee to catalogue non-English books. So when it comes to cataloguing those materials, there are three basic approaches that are normally followed: push the book back into the backlog, get someone else to catalogue it, or learn to do it yourself.

Some scholars such as Kim (2006) and Molavi (2006) criticized the use of Romanization tools for non-Roman scripts and described these tools as not user friendly. They pointed out that the Romanization system is often not known to users. They addressed the problems with Romanization in two different scripts. Kim analysed the cataloguing rules for Korean materials focusing on the McCune-Reischauer(MR) system, the Korean Romanization scheme used in the United States. She indicated that, although the system had been used for a long time in many Western countries, and was officially adopted by the Library of Congress (LC) for use in the cataloguing of Korean language materials, it has drawbacks in searching and retrieving materials in this language. In El-Sherbini and Chen (2011) study, twenty-eight end users and six librarians expressed various concerns about using Romanized terms to search non-Roman scripts. Most of the end user comments referred to the Romanization of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages and pointed out that even though standards for transliteration have been set by the American Library Association and Library of Congress, end users are usually not familiar with them. They indicated that they did not see any consistency in Romanization, which led them to miss information or to get incomplete results. Inconsistent Romanization forced end users to search by multiple forms of terms. Some end users indicated that to obtain good results they had to search in the original script or by International Standard Book Number (ISBN). Others expressed frustration with the inconsistency in Romanization, especially in Arabic and Hebrew languages. Other concerns related to incorrect diacritics and special characters. Romanization frequently becomes a problem when the subject heading is a personal name, corporate body, or a geographic name. Both the librarians and end users expressed concern with the Romanization in library catalogue and indicated that the transliterations are often inconsistent.

## **Methodology**

A desk research was conducted by extracting literature from different information sources using the key concepts of the study such as authority control, authority control



standards, cataloguing on non-Roman names, non-Roman languages. The literature was then interpreted and conclusions were drawn from the results.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the literature reviewed and the conclusion thereof, the following recommendation were made:

- **Establishment of authority control standards for non-Roman names**

Authority standards for non-Roman names should be established to guide cataloguers and metadata creators on how to record those names, especially because those names have got different syntax, meanings and origins.

- **Authority records to be created by the country of the author/ creator**

Authority records for personal names should be created in the country of the creator of the work even if the publication is first catalogued in the different country, the metadata creators should ask the country of the origin to create the authority record for that name as they will be able to interpret the name from its original meaning. Such name should then be filed in the international authority file to be used by cataloguers.

- **Creators of the work should be consulted**

Cataloguers should contact the creators of the work or the family of the creators to establish the preferred form of the name and to find other information associated with the name.

- **System support**

While establishing the supplement standards for non- Roman names, the cataloguing system should also be upgraded to adopt non- Roman characters and linguistics.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The challenges encountered in creating authority records for non-Roman names can create problems in accessing information sources created by those authors because different headings for the same name may be created by different cataloguers. Therefore, authority control standards should be created for other languages to guide cataloguers and to group the works of a creator of the works together.

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