Evaluation of Standard-Based First-Year African Language Textbooks

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Abstract

Textbooks of most African languages were written during the grammar-translation era, and some still serve as guides to the teaching and learning of African languages. This study intends to evaluate the vision of African language teaching and learning materials, specifically first-year textbooks focusing on where the African language teaching materials have been, where the field is now, and where it might go in terms of teaching and learning materials, based on the standards for foreign language teaching and learning in the United States. The study follows Schleicher and Gleisner's (2001) research on African language textbooks, which found that many African language textbooks were not communicatively oriented.

Keywords: African language textbooks, Standards, Evaluation criteria.

      In the past, foreign language teaching and learning materials were dominated by grammar translation and audiolingual methods. Such methods provide less opportunity for using language for communication, instead, the focus is more on memorizing vocabulary and short phrases for specific purposes. Scheicher and Gleisner (2001) state that the majority of African language teaching and learning materials were "written during the grammar-translation era" (p. 115). Most of these textbooks present specific types of conversation, such as for business or tourism, which restrict the understanding of the target language and its culture. Bennett (1969) affirms that "most of these textbooks are excellent grammar manuals written specifically for Peace Corps volunteers and linguistic graduate students who were primarily interested in acquiring grammatical competence" (Schleicher & Gleisner, p. 115). This changed, however, in the 1970s and 1980s when the development of the field of foreign language teaching involved the application of the communicative approach to the teaching and learning processes. Most commonly taught languages adopt this approach through the development of teaching and learning materials that help learners to

become grammatically, strategically, culturally, socially, and contextually competent.

The shift to communicative competence in less commonly taught languages remains more theoretical than practical in focusing on the teaching and learning materials. Foreign language teaching and learning materials that provide necessary authentic content motivate both the teaching and learning processes. In their article on African languages textbooks, Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) performed a study on how foreign language African textbooks meet the communicative approach. The result of this study depicts that some African languages textbooks stated communicative goals in their prefaces, but, practically, there were no communicative activities included in these textbooks. This paper observes the changes that have been made to African language textbooks since Schleicher and Gleisner's study conducted in 2001. The current approach to foreign language teaching focuses on the learners' ability to acquire cultural and grammatical competence through the communication process, which lacks in most African language textbooks.

Bragger and Rice (2000) note that the foreign language textbooks that are in use today reflect the significant changes in design and content that took place with the advent of the "language program," particularly in contrast to those in use just forty years ago that was dominated by vocabulary lists, seemingly random grammatical topics, and controlled exercises (Bragger & Rice, p. 110); Allen 2008, p. 1). The field of foreign language teaching and learning, like any other field, continues to expand as the number of new theories and approaches grows.

According to Bokamba (2002), the shift of African language materials began with four commonly taught African languages: Arabic, Swahili, Hausa, and Yoruba. Other African language textbooks were modeled on the Yoruba textbook series: *Je ka so Yoruba*. These textbook series are published by the National African Languages Resources Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the vision of African language teaching and learning materials, specifically first-year textbooks using some of the criteria for communicative-based textbooks presented by Glisan and Shrum (2009). The study intends to identify where African language teaching materials have been, where the field is now, and where its future might be based on the standards for foreign language teaching and learning in the United States. The standards for foreign language learning are categorized into five main goals: communication, cultures, connections,

comparisons, and communities. The standards identify the goal areas for foreign language learners, such as communicating effectively in the target communities, gaining knowledge and understanding of the target culture, using cultural content to connect their language learning with their academic fields, and comparing the cultural contents with their own, as well as building communities that contribute to lifelong learning (Standards, p. 31). Therefore, foreign language teaching and learning materials are expected to meet the standards to equip competent foreign language learners who can function in the target community effectively.

By providing an exploratory view of where African language textbooks are now based on the standards of foreign language teaching and learning, this study will provide insights into the potential of where these textbooks might be, and how educators and textbook writers can get there. The study will also encourage more research about the steps that have been made in moving toward meeting the standards for foreign language teaching and learning. Furthermore, the study will also suggest the role of publishers in ensuring that publishing textbooks meet the standards. In addition, it will serve as a guide for African language textbook writers who wish to write a textbook that meets foreign learners' needs.

This study evaluates twenty-seven African language textbooks. The selection of these textbooks was done randomly according to the textbooks' obtainability. The evaluated textbooks include more than one textbook from languages like Swahili, Xhosa, and Arabic; these textbooks were published in different years. The criteria for the textbooks evaluated originate from Glisan and Shrum (2009), who provide twenty-five criteria for a textbook evaluation in foreign language teaching and learning (p.65). The study carefully selects twelve criteria out of the twenty-five due to the fact that some of them can be combined and complement the others.

Schleicher and Gleisner's (2001) in their evaluation of communicative competence in African language textbooks found that many African language textbooks were not communicatively oriented, although their prefaces state that the goal is to help learners acquire communicative competence (p. 130). In order to find out if African language textbooks are standards-based, this study utilizes twelve out of the twenty-five criteria of the standard-based textbook evaluation designed by Glisan and Shrums (2009). While analyzing these criteria, the study observes the differences in the textbooks that were published before and after the publication of

Schleicher and Gleisner's study to determine the extent to which African language textbooks are communicatively based.

Twelve Criteria for evaluating communicatively based foreign language textbooks.

1. **The features of an organization based on relevant and interesting topics and cultural contexts**

It was observed that most of the African language textbooks evaluated in this study and published after the year of the birth of the Standards and Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) article have a clear organization of content that suits learners' interests, such as seeing a doctor, transportation, going to the market, greetings, etc. These topics are relevant to daily activities that are relatable in any society, and learners can practice in the classroom. Introducing topics familiar to learners' lives raises their interest in learning the culture and provides the opportunity for comparison with their own cultures in the process of communication. Stoller (2002) states that course content should be used as a "vehicle for helping students to master their language skills" (p. 112). On the other hand, Pessoa, et al (2007) observes that organizing content in foreign language teaching and learning fosters academic growth while also developing language proficiency (p. 102). Therefore, introducing content that relates to the interest of the learners motivates language learning and connects students to topics of interest. Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) explain that a well-explained unit in a textbook indicates to learners "right from the beginning that there will be practical benefit from their study of a particular aspect of the language" (p. 117).

In their evaluation of communicative-oriented textbooks, Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) found that many of the textbooks published before the Standards had chapters with headings like numerals and compound tenses. However, after more than fifteen years of their evaluation, there has been a significant change in first-year African language textbooks in terms of the organization of content. By the time of this writing in 2021, most first-year African foreign language textbooks demonstrate this change by providing features that provide cultural knowledge and other interesting topics as part of the content organization. These textbooks were published as a result of the 2001 African languages textbooks evaluation; they follow the example of one of the textbooks considered as being communicatively based. Therefore, these textbooks are titled *Let's Speak*

2. **Provides activities in which students talk to each other, share information and opinions, ask personalized questions, and express feelings and ideas.**

Activities that engage learners in sharing ideas and information encourage interaction and positive feedback as a result of developing proficiency in language learning. This study observed that only the 'Let's Speak' African language textbooks series that have been published since 2001 provide activities in which learners can work collaboratively in their learning processes and share their information and opinions about the specific topics included in each lesson. For example, learners are assigned activities that lead them to communicate and share information with the class, such as: "Ask your partner where she/he lives, and then report the answer to the class" (Nxumalo & Mkhize, p. 25). This kind of activity provides learners with the opportunity to use their newfound language skills in their daily routine, for example, in the use of greetings and introductions. Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) write that "the skill-using activities . . . provide learners with opportunities to express their own meanings, to be creative with language and communicate meaningful information in the classroom" (p. 124). For example, when students meet a person who happens to be a speaker of their target language, they will be able to introduce themselves and provide more information like where they live and what they are doing. Although learners are more into using the language for communication, there are also grammar expressions that are embedded in the conversation that allows learners to learn more implicitly rather than explicitly due to the fact that the goal/focus for language learning is to communicate.

Therefore, in 2001, Schleicher and Gleisner evaluated a selection of African language textbooks and found that "overall, skill-getting activities dominate the textbooks," whereby "the majority of the textbooks focus on the fill-in-the-blanks exercises that emphasize rote memorization and do not require students to use the language in a meaningful way" (p.125). Following the 2001 study, African language textbooks gained a new look by focusing more on communicative approach activities that give learners many opportunities to contextually use their target language.

3. **Provides authentic printed text (newspaper/magazine articles, ads, poems, short stories) that have engaging content and tasks**

Most of the textbooks evaluated in this study published before and after the introduction of the standards --- including those published before

and after Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) have advertisements, short stories, poems, magazine articles, or newspapers as part of their chapters. Most of the articles presented in the textbooks surveyed, however, focus only on comprehension, rather than on the actual use of the language. For example, reading the story of "The Lion and Three Friends" in Chapter 21 of the Hinnebusch (1996) textbook, learners are provided with questions about the story such as, "Who were the three friends? What did they see in the forest?" (p. 149). It is observed that learners' tasks provide little opportunity to use the target language in its contexts, which does not lead to achieving the standards for foreign language teaching and learning.

4. **Suggests strategies for comprehending and interpreting oral and written texts**

Learners in the foreign language classroom need strategies for comprehending texts to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Glisan and Shrum 2009). Teaching and learning tools like authentic pictures, photos, grammar notes, video, audio, and vocabulary lists help learners to understand written and oral texts. This study observed that most textbooks published before and after the publication of Standards and Schleicher and Gleisner's (2001) article present more than one picture in every chapter, as well as dialogue. Dialogues help learners create conversations based on their own life experiences, while pictures enable learners to create sentences through predictions and real-life situations, helping learners to express their thoughts and expressions in the process of communication. For instance, in a Yoruba textbook, Schleicher (1993) presents several pictures in each chapter that demonstrate practices in Yoruba culture, such as cooking, traveling, going to the market, and dressing These pictures enable foreign language learners to reflect on a real-life situation and construct sentences related to the event depicted in the picture. Before the series of African languages textbooks published by the National Language Resources Center, most foreign language African textbooks focused on helping students understand grammar rules, and so many textbooks include less authentic pictures to help learners comprehend and interpret texts for the sake of communication.

5. **Includes pre-listening/pre-viewing/pre-reading tasks**

Glisan and Shrum (2009) suggest that learners should become aware of specific vocabulary and important grammar rules for comprehending and interpreting oral and written texts. Pre-listening and re-reading tasks involve lists of vocabulary and grammar before or within the lesson. This study

observes that most of the Let's Speak series contains lists of vocabulary within a text. For example, in the Akan textbook, a lesson that teaches about introductions presents a monologue with some English translation on the side:

name/is   Me din de Kofi Ofori

live   Mete Nkran.

have/older   Mewɔ nua panyin baako

                 Ne din de Ayaw

                 Ayaw te Kwaboanta

don't have/any   Menni nua kumaa biara

The author in this particular text and other textbooks published with the series of Je ka So Yoruba use reading strategies, which make reading in a foreign language easy due to the fact that learners will not have to contact the dictionary often. Before the publication of the standards and Schleicher and Gleisner's (2001) article, most African language textbooks did not include pre-listening and pre-reading activities in an attempt to simplify language-learning processes. It can be hypothesized that the authors of these textbooks were less aware of the communicative foreign language approach that focuses on the ability of the learner to communicate in the target language. Most of the textbooks evaluated in this study published contain some important vocabulary within the text and lists of vocabulary at the end of each lesson, as well as in the index pages to simplify the reading process.

6. **Includes tasks in which students speak and write to an audience of listeners/readers (i.e. process-oriented tasks)**

Learning a foreign language and its function requires activities that engage learners in communicative processes by allowing actual conversation. For example, learners can use role-playing, panel discussion, projects, and other collaborative activities to acquire the language. In this study, nineteen textbooks out of twenty-seven include pair work, group work, and individual presentations that allow learners to use the language for communication. Among the nineteen textbooks fifteen were published after the birth of the Standards and the other four books were published before the Standards. The following are samples from three of the evaluated textbooks published

after the Standards; each example illustrates how group and pair work is presented:

"Tell your friend about the food you like, also tell him/her where one can get it and how to cook it."

"Talk about three things you want to do."

"You are going to the store to buy something. Call and ask if your friend can go with you."

These activities help learners to communicate in different contexts, such as demonstrating their daily life activities and expressing ideas and opinions. However, for the sake of achieving the goals for the standards, these tasks balance the various contexts of language learning by pointing to examples in the target communities in order to help the learner get a richer feeling for his/her target communities. Before the Standards, foreign language textbooks did not include scenarios that enable learners to develop their communicative skills as well as cultural understanding. Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) insist that "students will not learn how to effectively communicate in a foreign language unless they are given realistic exercise and tasks, which are tasks that native speakers perform in the target culture" (p.122). Learners practicing going to the market or cooking in the target language, and traveling in the target communities help them to bring the foreign language world to the foreign language classroom.

7. **Presents clear and concise grammar explanations that are necessary for communication**

The field of foreign language teaching and learning has moved from the traditional method of grammar-centered instruction to communicative grammar presentation. Current foreign and second language theories and research concentrate on issues concerning how to present clear and concise grammar notes in a communicative way. Twenty-two of the textbooks evaluated in this study present grammar explanations. Two textbooks published before the Standards did not have grammar explanations. The presentation of grammar notes does not reflect the communicative tasks in all of the lessons in a single textbook. Glisan and Shrum (2009) suggest that, for a textbook to meet the criteria for the goal of the standards, it should present "grammar that serves communication needs" (p.57). Most of the textbooks evaluated in this study especially those published after the Standards contain grammar explanations that reflect learners' communicative needs. For example, in explaining the "past perfect tense negative" in Zulu,

the author contextualizes the tense by presenting it in a sentence after a brief explanation: "Past perfect tense negative is created by attaching the suffix –anga at the end of the verb

Angivakaselanga ugogo   I have not visited my grandmother

Asiqedanga   We have not finished" (Nxumalo & Mkhize, p. 171).

This example from a Zulu textbook presents a grammar explanation that helps learners use the language in a real-life situation. The above example indicates that the emphasis in on tense, which is bolded. At the end of the lesson, the authors provide a task to follow up on the use of the past perfect tense negative to help the learner practice new grammar skills for communication. There is also an example of how to negate the tense and learners' activities that lead them to use the language in a real situation. (Nxumalo & Mkhize, p. 173).

8. **Presents vocabulary thematically, in context, and with the use of visual and authentic realia**

Vocabulary in foreign language teaching and learning is, of course, an important component, as it helps learners develop a semantic and grammatical lexicon. Becoming familiar with the vocabulary as it is presented thematically results in an increased level of proficiency for learners. Textbooks have to provide a vocabulary list that the students can use in real-life situations in their own community, as well as the target communities. Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) affirm that, in order for vocabulary to meet learners' needs, textbooks should "also sequence vocabulary according to the needs to enable learners to practice the language according to their priorities and differences when learning a language" (p.127). Most textbooks published before and after the publication of the Standards present important vocabulary within the text, as is indicated in the Akan monologue above. The list of vocabulary presented at the end of each lesson also provides learners with different options for using the new words to express their ideas and thoughts in the processes of communication. Some textbooks do not provide this sequence of vocabulary in the lessons toward the end of the textbooks. This study hypothesizes that this occurs because the authors believe that the learners have become more familiar with grammar and vocabulary as they approach the end of the textbook. Despite the presence of vocabulary lists, the authors do not always situate the vocabulary in the context of cultural

practices that reflect the target community to help learners use the language for communication.

Before the publication of the Standards, African language textbooks presented lists of vocabulary that focused on the memorization of words, the approach that limits the use of language for communication and emphases memorization. However, there are limited activities that focus on the use of these new words in a real-life situation of the learners as they compare to that of the target language.

9. **Provides opportunities for students to discover and explore the products of culture and their relationship to cultural perspectives**

The use of authentic materials in foreign language teaching and learning aims at providing cross-cultural understanding. However, some textbooks focus more on presenting pictures that provide opportunities for learners to use the language for communication purposes while focusing less on the target environment. Glisan and Shrum (2009) recommend an approach to culture in foreign language textbooks that emphasizes a constructivist approach to exploring the connection of cultural products and practices with their philosophical perspectives, enabling learners to develop more relevant cultural insights into the target culture and their own. Textbooks that use drawings and illustrations provide less opportunity to discover the products of culture and their perspectives due to the fact that they are not attractive to the learner's eyes compared to colored pictures. Also, they are hard to read and interpret. Six of the textbooks evaluated in this study use drawings, stick figures, and illustrations. Only two Swahili textbooks; *Tuseme Kiswahili* and *Kiswahili Bila mipaka* - present colored pictures from Swahili-speaking communities. It is hypothesized that African languages lack funding for developing quality textbooks that include paper quality, content, and pictures.

Before the Standards, African language textbooks contained pictures that did not focus on the cultural reality and therefore did not allow learners to use the language for cultural and communicative understanding. Most of the textbooks evaluated in this study present photos from the target environment, such as maps, bus terminals and schedules, newspapers, and tourist attractions like Mount Kilimanjaro and Masai Mara National Park in Kenya. However, for these textbooks to be considered a standards-based model, the pictures should be colored to inspire learning processes.

10. **Provides opportunities for students to use the target language to learn about their subject areas**

Textbooks of African languages have to focus on interdisciplinary topics for learners to be able to "reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through learning a foreign language" (Standards, p. 54). Textbooks published after the standards and the publication of Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) in this study present topics from different disciplines in order to help learners connect to different fields, such as transportation, medicine, going to the market, storytelling, the education system, travel, restaurants, and food. Glisan and Shrum (2009) maintain that topics in foreign language textbooks should be intellectually meaningful and engage learners in the parts of communication as they connect to their fields. The topics should help learners engage in "meaning-making and acquiring knowledge through the foreign language" (p. 57). Twenty-one textbooks mostly published after the Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) present different topics in each lesson, as well as the grammatical skills instead of the grammatical structure of the language that enable the acquisition of cultural and grammatical aspects of the language. For instance, in the Yoruba textbook, the author presents the topic of "shopping in an open market" with the specific grammar skills of using "why questions." Learners who are interested in business can connect their interest in the way things are arranged and the different ways of approaching customers, such as bargaining in the target community.

This study observes that textbooks that were published before the birth of the Standards present less interdisciplinary topics that enable learners to connect to their areas of study as they compare their language and the target language. Most of these textbooks contain dialogue and or monologue that focus on greetings or introduction.

11. **Provides opportunities for students to compare products, practices, and the perspectives of the native culture and target cultures in interesting ways**

Language and culture are inextricably intertwined with each other; therefore, any information presented in a textbook should provide learners with some cultural lesson that leads to a better understanding of the target community. Language operates in the cultural contexts of any language. Most textbooks published before and after the publication of the Standards and Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) present dialogues, short stories, photos, and pictures from the target environment to help learners learn both the language

and culture. Twenty-three of the studied textbooks present cultural notes in each lesson and are explained in English. Providing cultural notes gives learners knowledge about cultural practices, products, and perspectives. For instance, in the Yoruba textbook, the author presents the days of the week, which are also used for naming purposes. The author states "Yoruba beliefs and activities are reflected in these names of the day" (Schleicher p. 123). The author provides the meaning of each day in Yoruba culture, such as "Ojo Isegun," which is "Tuesday" but also means "a day of victory." Learners are able to acquire the culture of naming in Yoruba, which enables them to then make comparisons with the culture of naming in their own community. Various relevant contexts included in African language textbooks provide learners with ample opportunity to compare cultures, as well as become familiar with the new world of the target culture.

In this study's observations, most of the textbooks presented photos, pictures, and maps for different topics, which provided learners with the ability to compare these components of culture with their own comprehension. In attaining the goals for the standards for foreign language teaching and learning, many of the African language textbooks published after the Standards emphasize on communicative activities and cultural contexts and contexts, directed into promoting communicative, linguistic, and cultural competencies in a foreign language

12. Integrates technology effectively into instruction (audiotapes, videotapes, interactive video CD-ROM, World Wide Web, email, online, chat rooms)

This study found the before the publication of Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) African language textbooks included limited technological sources like radio and music. In the evaluation of the textbooks, five textbooks, three published before 2001 and two after 2001, include online sources CD. It is observed that recent textbooks have continued to provide a few technology sources to help learners use the language for communication and practicing the culture. Nineteen textbooks do not have CDs attached to them although some of them stated that they have CDs accompanying them. Few textbooks that contain CDs provide less interactive information about the target language. These CDs are basically the actual textbook recorded. Another textbook has links for songs on the internet; however, there is no communicative task assigned to the learners to help them use the language for communicative purposes. The standards for foreign language encourage the use of technology in a foreign language as an

important tool for providing learners with linguistic and cultural information inside and outside the classroom. In order to achieve the goals for the standards, African language textbooks must consider the use of technology to inspire and motivate learning processes. Learners of African languages are surrounded by all kinds of technology. African language textbooks authors can also provide useful links for the learners to use in learning language and culture.

How can African language textbooks achieve the goals set by the standards?

The study evaluates the textbooks in order to show that most African language textbooks have shifted from the grammar-translation method to a near-communicative competence. In the communicative competence evaluation of the selected African language first-year textbooks, Schleicher and Gleisner (2001) found that most African language textbooks were an "excellent source of grammar manuals" (p.130). However, ten years after their evaluation, there has been a great change in African language textbooks. Therefore, the new paradigm is one of the many tools that can be considered in developing materials for the teaching and learning of African languages. Most of the pictures presented in these textbooks—specifically the Let's Speak series—are authentic due to the fact that most of them are from the target communities. These textbooks also present folklore, videos, magazines, and articles from the target language, which helps learners to use their language skills in their learning processes. Most of these textbooks encourage learners to participate in the teaching and learning processes that lead them to the modes of communication.

Having many materials, however, does not necessarily indicate that their contents meet the needs of the learners to effectively achieve the goals for the standards of foreign language teaching and learning. Schleicher and Moshi (2001) state that material development is one of the biggest problems facing African language teaching and learning in the United States (p.205). Until this moment much less commonly taught languages are still in the transition of improving the available teaching and learning resources. Therefore, the future for African language textbooks is in fact "now," a sentiment echoed by Schleicher and Everson (2006) when they state that "the time is now" for these improvements to be made (p.199). Scholars of African languages should not take a rest after making a step forward. Bokamba (2002) states that African language programs have made a great move in teaching

and learning materials that range from traditional textbooks to online resources.

There is much to be done in the development of African language teaching and learning materials in order for this type of instruction to achieve the goals for the standards for foreign language teaching and learning in the United States. Having a good textbook does not necessarily indicate that the goals for the standards will be attained. Met (2006) observes that "bad teaching is not to blame" (p. 58) due to other issues that arise in the classroom, such as time, students' motivation, and the awareness that language coordinators and instructors have about the standards for foreign language teaching and learning. It is evident, however, that African language teaching and learning materials have gone through stages of advancement due to the scholars who devote their time, knowledge, and experience to the future of these learning materials/textbooks. Most of these scholars are linguists, language pedagogues, and literature specialists (Bokamba 2002, p. 1). The field is developing and will still develop following the invention of new theories and principles of foreign language teaching and learning. African language textbooks need to focus more on authenticity in order to accomplish the goals set by the standards for teaching foreign languages.

Authors of African language textbooks need to be aware of the standards and know that the use of authentic and realistic materials from the target environment will promote learners' understanding of culture. For example, pictures presented in textbooks should provide real information, as well as provide students with an opportunity to practice the language by using the pictures. If the pictures are just presented in the textbooks with task-based activities, they will be less effective in providing linguistic and cultural information.

Writers of African language textbooks need training and guidelines before writing a foreign language textbook in order to ensure that they are aware of the current status of the foreign language teaching and learning field. Schleicher and Moshi (2001) observe that most African language teaching materials rely less on research and study for foreign language teaching and learning. However, most textbooks published from the year 2012 incorporate current theories and research, but there remains the fact that there is no single textbook that meets all of the criteria that is mentioned by Glisan and Shrum (2009). It should be noted that these textbooks have to be both theoretical and practical to help learners comprehend the language and its culture.

Instructors of African languages have to be aware and mindful in selecting a textbook that focuses on achieving the goals for the standards. Met (2006) states that "language teachers need to recognize that they have the power to make a change and use that power to good effect" (p. 61). This may be a challenge to graduate students who have to follow whatever instructions are given by their supervisors for the sake of their positions. Therefore, African language coordinators should be targeted for information training in order to make advancements in textbooks in the next ten years.

Writers have to be aware of the role of technology in foreign language teaching and learning. Textbooks that indicate the use of video, chat, or the Internet motivates learning processes. LeLoup and Ponterio (2006) support this theory, writing that technology "creates rich cultural materials and presentations for and by language learners" (p.163). The authors of African language textbooks need to know that using technology will help learners develop their communicative competence, as can the use of technology to imitate the sounds of the language by using video and/or audio.

Research should be done to determine how learners use these textbooks in order to better ascertain the learners' needs as they use these textbooks. Theoretically, educators may think that certain textbooks are good, but it is ultimately the experience of the learners that determines their quality. There has been less research conducted about how learners like the textbooks they are using and their reasons for their opinions. A study that addresses these questions could be conducted in different schools or colleges that use diverse textbooks. Such a study could incorporate not only the students' opinions but also those of the instructors for the sake of comparison.

Research on the implementation of textbooks is also necessary so that instructors can be provided with training about how to use the textbooks in the classroom. If a textbook is good but the instructor is not aware of the current theories and methods of achieving the standards for foreign language teaching and learning, it will be difficult for the goals to be achieved. Instructors have to know what the learners should be able to accomplish when they teach a foreign language.

Textbooks are fundamental to language learning. Textbooks in foreign language classrooms have been considered a vital tool to guide teaching and learning processes. It is through textbooks that a foreign language instructor can create his or her own techniques in order to simplify

their language instructions. Other sources of learning, such as online courses and websites, are designed and modified based on textbooks that have existed for years. In his article, Sercu (2004) views textbooks in foreign language classrooms as the "guiding principle of many foreign language courses,", particularly at the elementary level. However, it has been questioned the extent to which textbooks meet students' needs, due to the fact that learning a new language goes beyond linguistics. A textbook is not all-inclusive and cannot incorporate everything from the target environment. It is because of this limitation that instructors need the knowledge and understanding of the theories, principles, and methods relating to foreign language teaching in order to properly utilize the textbook in the classroom situation. The use of standards-based materials in teaching and learning foreign languages should encourage students to not only take an in-depth look at the lifestyles, attitudes, value systems, and socio-historical circumstances of the people living in the culture under study, but should also include them in developing a global outlook and becoming conscious of the importance of wider political, social, economic, and scientific issues.

The ideal African language textbook, therefore, should contain the criteria mentioned by Glisan and Shrum. This study does not observe an African textbook that meets all of the criteria as suggested. However, some of these textbooks include most of them, although not in every lesson or not exactly as described. For example, the contents are organized in most of the textbooks, but not in an interesting way as described by Glisan and Shrum (2009). It should be noted that there is no single foreign language textbook that contains all the criteria for the communicative approach. Therefore, the foreign language teacher has to be resourceful in searching for supplemental materials.

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