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Native and Nonnative English-Speaking Teachers' Expectations of Teacher's Manuals Accompanying General English and Pronunciation Skills Books

This study explores native and nonnative English-speaking teachers' expectations of teacher's manuals accompanying general English skills books and pronunciation teaching books, as well as their impressionistic evaluation of a printed and online teacher's manual. The study has a mixed-methods design incorporating an online survey and 2 interviews. Findings showed that teachers expected a teacher's manual to provide additional guidance on which pronunciation features to teach and how to present them effectively. The online teacher's manual was preferred over the printed one by most of the teachers because of its technological design features. This study suggests that both native and nonnative English-speaking teachers welcome online manuals because of their increased accessibility and practicality. Additionally, greater amounts of guidance can be given in an online teacher's manual and this guidance can be presented in different modalities, such as in printable text, audio, or video.

Research shows that teachers may be reluctant to teach second language (L2) pronunciation (Burns, 2006; Derwing & Munro, 2005). The reasons for this reluctance are mostly accounted for by teachers' lack of training on pronunciation and pronunciation teaching pedagogy (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Macdonald, 2002). Although teachers mostly express a desire for more professional training in pronunciation teaching (Breitkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Burns, 2006), lack of sufficient training may lead to teachers' not being sure about what is achievable (Derwing & Munro,

2005), not feeling comfortable about setting the teaching priorities (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011), and not having clear ideas about how to teach pronunciation (Couper, 2017).

According to Derwing (2008), people who teach pronunciation are supposed to be knowledgeable about L2 acquisition and trained in teaching pronunciation, speaking, and listening. However, researchers acknowledge that this is often not the case. Some instructors take phonetics and phonology courses, but they are not trained in teaching pronunciation (Couper, 2017). Therefore, those teachers may have the misconception that the focus of teaching pronunciation involves little more than teaching phonetic symbols.

Some teachers state that because their teaching curricula do not encourage or assess pronunciation skills, they have little motivation to teach pronunciation and therefore tend to skip it (Macdonald, 2002). Other teachers express difficulties in diagnosing students' pronunciation problems unless there is a clear problem hindering their understanding of a student. These teachers may avoid teaching pronunciation unless there is a communication breakdown related to pronunciation, and they may prefer teaching only those pronunciation features that they feel knowledgeable or confident about, regardless of whether the features are necessary.

According to Couper (2017), teachers expressed their lack of competence in explaining what is problematic in students' pronunciation and their need to learn ways to do so. In the same study, Uruguayan teachers, especially those who were not confident in their own pronunciation, chose to avoid teaching certain suprasegmental features such as intonation and stress. As one of the teachers said, "I don't feel confident in intonation so it's better not to teach it" (p. 38).

Other reasons may also contribute to teachers' feeling less willing to teach pronunciation. For instance, novice teachers, regardless of their language background, may feel nervous about uncertainties that arise while they are teaching, how to structure the course in general, not having sufficient knowledge to explain content-related questions, or not being able to create additional examples or exercises other than the ones provided in the student's materials. Nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) may have other insecurities, such as not believing in their eligibility as the model voice in teaching (Bernat, 2008; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Ma, 2012).

The Role and Status of Teacher's Manuals in Teaching

Teachers often have individual reasons for their reluctance to teach pronunciation or to avoid teaching certain pronunciation features. However, motivation to teach this skill can be increased—for

example via teacher's manuals (TMs), which can provide teachers with support in those areas where they most need help.

Masuhara (2011), a materials development researcher who also taught English for more than 30 years, said that if he had been asked what he wanted from a course book while he was teaching English, his answer would have always been, "I want coursebooks that are so engaging, inspiring, flexible and effective that I can teach without much extra work" (p. 236). What Masuhara asks from a course book is that it provide a sense of security to a teacher, that is, something he or she can hold on to and build on. This is precisely when a TM can be helpful for teachers to feel more secure and confident in their teaching.

A TM can play many roles in helping teachers become more confident about teaching pronunciation. It can give an understanding about the author's goals in developing the book (Burns & Hill, 2012). It can provide guidance and support to teachers, not as a script but as a resource. In some countries such as Iran, TMs might provide more than support to teachers since TMs include descriptions about what to include in a course, how things are supposed to be implemented in a class, and what methods and evaluation techniques are to be used (Nazari, 2011). A useful TM provides effective backups and adjustments for the core materials, and if this is not the case or there is no TM, teachers will need to make all the required modifications for their own situations (Islam & Mares, 2003). Although it is assumed that all teachers are able to adapt materials if necessary, this may not be a simple task (Samuda, 2005), especially for those who are new to the profession or who do not feel confident for whatever reason. (See also Zimmerman, 2018 [this issue].)

Although the function of a TM is not to replace the role of a teacher by leaving no room for self-initiative, it should nonetheless assist teachers in improving their knowledge of the subject matter and their teaching pedagogy. A carefully designed TM may even help teachers increase their language awareness, which is defined as "the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively" (Thornbury, 1997, p. x). A TM can also help teachers become more independent of the teaching material, for example by encouraging them to carefully select supplementary materials or even to develop their own materials. Therefore, a helpful TM should not only provide answer keys for the exercises in the book but also guide teachers in their knowledge of the subject matter and in their own language awareness. A TM should create a sense of security for language teachers, especially for the less experienced, nonnative, and untrained teachers (all of whom may, as a result, lack self-confidence). Useful TMs do not make teachers dependent on overt guid-

ance but instead contribute to their professional development and “help teachers develop towards an eventual position of self-reliance and independence of such explicit guidance” (Hemsley, 1997, p. 72).

TMs should thus be helpful in providing the support teachers need. However, TMs have mostly been recognized as an answer key to the exercises in the student’s materials (Sheldon, 1987) more than as a source that can assist teachers with their various needs. As a result, the role of TMs in supporting teachers in pronunciation teaching has not captured much attention, but a few studies have touched on their role and function. Based on their survey of the teacher’s manuals of six book series, Derwing, Diepenbroek, and Foote (2012) reported that numerous series need to include more support and clearer descriptions for teachers. In a recent publication, Levis and Sonsaat (2016) proposed that providing the support teachers need is a must for high-quality pronunciation teaching materials. This can be achieved by carefully designed TMs; however, the authors asserted that many TMs fall short of achieving this goal by not being as informative as they should be for teachers with different backgrounds and needs. They warned TM authors not to assume that each teacher is well trained, experienced, or confident enough to teach pronunciation. What these studies show may account for why TMs are primarily seen as an answer key for the exercises in a student’s book.

In line with this “answer key” image of TMs, teachers frequently report that they do not have a TM for their textbook or they do not know whether there is a TM for it. The author of a well-known oral communication skills book for international teaching assistants reports, “I was talking to some of the people that actually use some of the books and they said oh I didn’t realize there’s a teachers’ manual. So that was an eye-opener because I had assumed that people were aware of that but I guess not” (C. Meyers, personal communication, May 2016). Although teachers are likely to use a free TM, they usually will not spend money on it even if the cost is minimal.

Unfortunately, TMs are not one of the publishers’ top priorities because they are not profitable. Publishers usually do not want to invest money in a TM as it is either free supplementary material to a textbook or it is sold very cheaply. Judy Gilbert, the author of *Clear Speech* (Gilbert, 2012), a pronunciation teaching book that is popular worldwide, reported that publication houses sometimes spend a lot of money for good-quality paper for the student’s book and therefore they do not have much money left to invest in the TM (personal communication, May 2016). What this means is that usually only one free TM is given to a school if it orders multiple copies of the student’s book; in such cases, teachers do not have individual copies of the TM,

which greatly decreases the accessibility, visibility, and use of the TM.

Because of the lack of emphasis given to TMs by publication houses and teachers, it follows that TMs are not used in a way that can increase their support function. Accordingly, the many advantages they can provide are missed. However, with the advancement of technology both publication houses' and teachers' concerns can be addressed and TMs can fulfill their role better, both by going beyond being an answer key for teachers and by eliminating the additional unwanted cost for publication houses. This could be achieved by employing digital and web-based materials instead of using only printed materials.

Digital and web-based materials are rapidly changing the way that teaching materials are designed. It is now possible to store the content of a TM on a web-based platform, which can radically lower the cost of production. For instance, more guidance can be provided without considering the number of pages to be printed, or information can be presented in auditory, video, and visual modes—thus improving space and design issues. Considering the physical and acoustic nature of pronunciation teaching, embedding videos into a TM may be informative for a pronunciation teacher; it is possible on a web-based platform to have a pronunciation expert providing content and pedagogical content knowledge in a short video. These could be done for printed material as well, but the digital components presented in a supplementary CD or DVD may again increase the cost and accordingly the accessibility of the support provided to teachers in a traditional TM. Thus, with the advance of technology, online teacher's manuals (OTM) appear to be better suited to the nature of pronunciation teaching as well as more accessible and lower in cost.

The Current Study

However, despite the many benefits that an OTM can offer, teachers may not welcome them as they would a printed teacher's manual (PTM). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how teachers react to TMs presented in different modalities (i.e., printed vs. online) and how useful they find these manuals. Designing a helpful TM for a population primarily requires an understanding of their expectations from it. Therefore, this study investigates NESTs' and NNESTs' (a) expectations from TMs accompanying general English skills books and pronunciation books, and (b) their initial reactions to an OTM and a PTM designed for an unpublished pronunciation book, *Pronunciation for a Purpose* (Levis & Muller Levis, n.d.). This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are native and nonnative English-speaking teachers' expectations of a TM accompanying a general English skills book and a pronunciation book?
2. What are native and nonnative English-speaking teachers' evaluations about a printed versus an online teacher's manual accompanying a pronunciation book?

Methods

This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design in which quantitative findings are further explained with the help of qualitative findings. In this method, qualitative data are collected from a certain number of the participants who provided quantitative data previously (Creswell, 2015). Explanatory sequential design works best for this study because most of the quantitative data in the study require understanding participants' personal input.

Participants

Participants for this study were recruited using convenience sampling, which entails recruiting participants from individuals available for the study (Mackey & Gass, 2005); in this case, the pool that the study drew from included volunteers who took an online survey sent in a recruitment email. The recruitment email was sent to personal contacts and to two Listservs (a pronunciation-focused Listserv and one targeting international teaching assistant professionals) to which the targeted population subscribed. Subscribers of the pronunciation-focused Listserv, which had more than 200 members, were recruited by invitation only. The other Listserv was a primarily US-based group including international teaching assistant professionals. Target participants who had previously taught oral communication skills or pronunciation were recruited. In total, 59 individuals responded to the online survey; however, 15 of those were excluded because they did not respond to many questions in the survey. Thus, the number of the final participants was 44.

Participants in this study fell into two groups: NESTs ($N=25$) and NNESTs ($N=19$). As shown in Table 1, these two groups differed in the following ways:

1. The NNESTs in this study were about 10 years younger than the NESTs on average; most ($n=17$; 89%) had spent more than a year in an English-speaking country pursuing a graduate degree in the field.
2. The NESTs had more experience teaching oral communications or pronunciation skills, with 68% of the group having

Table 1
Characteristics of the Participants in the Study
(NESTs and NNESTs)

| | <i>NESTs</i> (N= 25) | | <i>NNESTs</i> (N= 19) | |
|--|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Age | Mean | 48 | Mean | 36 |
| | <i>SD</i> | 14.60 | <i>SD</i> | 9.5 |
| | Range | 28-82 | Range | 28-67 |
| Length of oral communications and/or pronunciation teaching experience | 1-3 years | 12% | 1-3 years | 44% |
| | 4-6 years | 8% | 4-6 years | 11% |
| | 7-10 years | 12% | 7-10 years | 17% |
| | 11 or more | 68% | 11 or more | 28% |
| Taken a pronunciation class before | Yes | 48% | Yes | 89% |
| | No | 52% | No | 11% |
| How much do you like teaching English pronunciation? (1 = <i>not at all</i> ; 10 = <i>extremely much</i>) | Mean | 8.29 | Mean | 8.81 |
| | <i>SD</i> | 2.17 | <i>SD</i> | 1.24 |

taught these skills for at least 11 years or more; the majority of the NNESTs, on the other hand, had taught these skills only between one to six years.

3. Concerning training for pronunciation teaching, most of the NNESTs (89%) had taken a required pronunciation class during one of their academic degrees, while only 50% of NESTs had done so.

In other words, while the NESTs were more experienced in teaching overall, the NNESTs appeared to have had more relevant training in pronunciation skills. Finally, a mutual characteristic of both groups of teachers is that they reported liking to teach English pronunciation.

Materials

Survey and Interviews. Of the 44 participants, 17 teachers (9 NESTs and 8 NNESTs) were interviewed after they took the online survey. Additionally, 8 teachers (5 NESTs and 3 NNESTs) evaluated two units of the PTM and OTM accompanying an unpublished pronunciation book (Levis & Muller Levis, n.d.). The survey elicited information on various topics: (a) background information, (b) teacher cognition—entailing self-perceptions of pronunciation knowledge and teaching, and pedagogical practices in relation to materials use—and (c) expectations of a teacher’s manual in general and specifi-

cally for pronunciation teaching. The results of the first two topics in the survey are not used in this study since they are part of another study. The section about teachers' expectations from TMs in general was adopted from Cunningsworth (1995) and more questions were added by the researcher for the TMs that accompanied pronunciation books. The survey included multiple-choice questions, checklists, yes/no questions, 5-point Likert scales, rating questions, and open-ended questions. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and was delivered using the online survey software Qualtrics.

The post-survey interview involved 21 semistructured questions, and it elicited information on the same topics as in the survey. The TM evaluation interview included 11 semistructured questions eliciting information about teachers' impressions of the PTM and OTM they evaluated based on their impressionistic observation (i.e., without teaching with it). It asked what teachers liked or disliked about each manual, and which one they would eventually prefer to use if they were to choose only one.

Printed and Online Teacher's Manuals. Both the PTM and the OTM accompany the same unpublished student's book (Levis & Muller Levis, n.d.); therefore, most of the content of the manuals was the same. However, the OTM had some additional content (i.e., instructional videos) because of the modality of the presentation. The PTM was designed by the authors of the student's book, whereas the OTM was designed by the researcher. By the time the data for this study were being collected, there were only two units of the OTM ready for use; therefore, the participants who evaluated the TMs did so by analyzing only two units: one unit on segmentals (vowels and consonants) and another on suprasegmentals (word stress).

There were several differences between the PTM and OTM, but the main differences were the layout and organization. For instance, the PTM was designed to be a separate book that was not physically attached to the student's material; thus, the teachers would need to have both books to do the cross-referencing of the contents. In the case of the OTM, the content of the student's material and the teacher's manual were presented next to each other in accordion boxes (see Figure 1) that could be expanded or collapsed based on what teachers wanted to see at any given time.

Another difference between the two manuals was the provision of audio materials. Audio material of the printed manual had to be shared on a CD or on an online file-storage system, and therefore, had to be downloaded by the teachers. For the OTM, teachers did not need to download anything since the audio material was embedded. Most of the words in the OTM were clickable; thus, teachers could

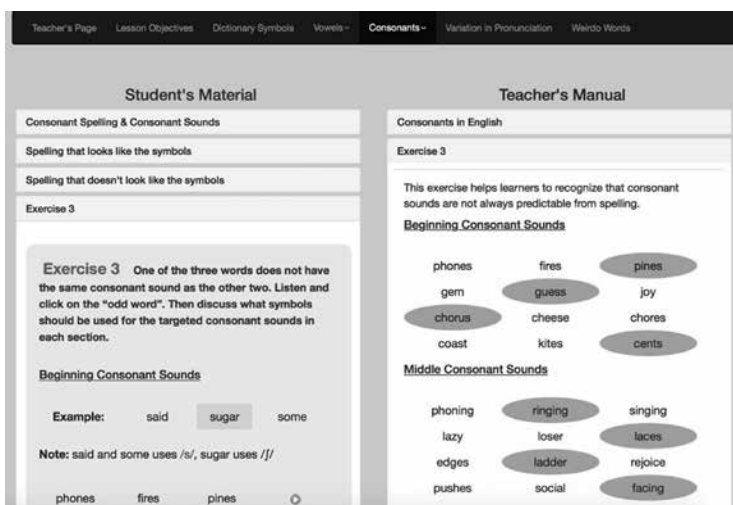


Figure 1. Presentation of student's and teacher's materials on the OTM.

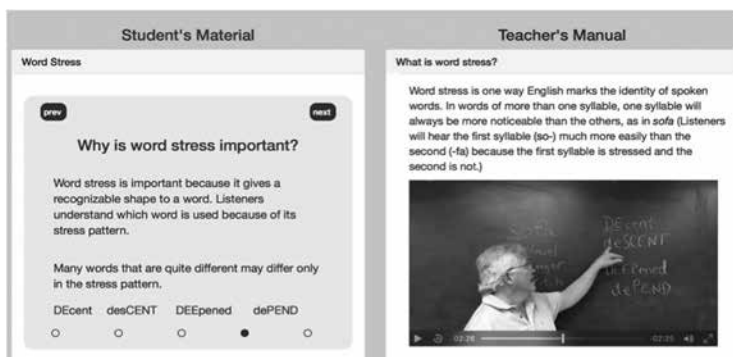


Figure 2. An instructional video explaining the concept presented in the student's book.

click on the words to hear them or click the play icon to listen to a spoken text for an exercise. There were also instructional videos in the OTM (see Figure 2), which explained the given pronunciation feature. This information also was provided in written form in both the PTM and the OTM. The difference between the PTM and the OTM was that the videos presented the information in a different modality; that is, teachers could watch an expert explain a pronunciation feature or demonstrate how this feature is taught. Additionally, the examples used in the instructional videos were mostly the examples used in the student's material and additional examples produced for the videos

only. The purpose of using the examples from the student's material was to exemplify how teachers could use these examples to explain the pronunciation feature they were teaching. In other words, the purpose was to provide tips for teachers on how to use the teaching points (explanations and examples) in the student's materials.

Procedures

As previously mentioned, the researcher contacted members of two Listservs by email in Spring 2016 and asked for their participation. In the email, participants were informed that there were four steps of data collection in this study, including an online survey, a post-survey interview, and an (impressionistic) materials evaluation followed by another interview (see Figure 3). They were free to participate in as many of those steps as they wanted. The only step that all participants took part in was the initial online survey. All participants were asked to provide a nickname in the survey so that their data could be presented in the study without revealing their identities. At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they would volunteer for a post-survey interview and/or materials evaluation. The researcher contacted those who agreed to be interviewed to schedule a face-to-face or Skype interview. Most of the interviews were conducted through Skype since almost all participants, except for two, were at different places from where the researcher was. Face-to-face interviews were recorded through Audacity digital audio editor (<https://www.audacityteam.org/>), while online interviews were recorded with Call Recorder software (<http://www.ecamm.com/mac/callrecorder/>). Post-survey interviews took 30 minutes on average.

The teachers who were willing to evaluate the materials were told that the student's materials were printed materials only and they were not under investigation for this study. Teachers were specifically asked to focus on the TMs, which were provided to them in print as PDFs and in online format through the researcher's website (see <http://sonsaat.public.iastate.edu/prosite/index.html>). Teachers were also asked to evaluate the materials by focusing on two teaching topics: (a) consonants and vowels and (b) word stress. Teachers were given two weeks to complete this step of the study. Once participants were done with their evaluations, they were interviewed. Each interview took about 25 minutes and was recorded through Call Recorder software (2016).

Data Analysis

To analyze the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated through the SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. All Likert-scale questions in the survey were analyzed by

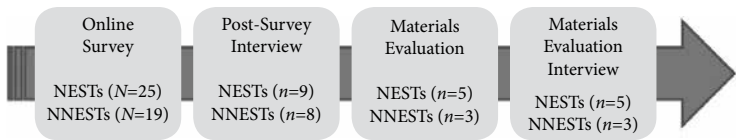


Figure 3. Research timeline.

Mann-Whitney U tests to explore if there were any statistically significant differences between NESTs and NNESTs.

The qualitative data were obtained from the open-ended questions in the survey, the post-survey, and the materials evaluation interviews. All interviews were transcribed verbatim by a transcriber and read by the researcher to double-check correctness. Open-ended questions and the interviews were segmented and coded by the researcher. Coding in this study was data driven; that is, the codes did not exist at the beginning but were created based on the recurring themes in the data (Brinkmann, 2013).

Results

Teachers' Expectations From Teacher's Manuals

The purpose of the first RQ, “What are native and nonnative English-speaking teachers’ expectations of a teacher’s manual accompanying a general English skills book and a pronunciation book?” was to find out what teachers expected from the TMs accompanying general English speaking books and TMs designed for pronunciation teaching books. For this question, participants were asked to rate the importance of certain criteria for a TM on a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = *not important at all*, 5 = *extremely important*). Table 2 shows that NNESTs rated almost all criteria, except for item 4, with slightly higher importance compared to the NESTs. However, according to the results of the Mann-Whitney test, there are only three items (Item 6: $U=76$, $p=.002$, Item 17: $U=94.5$, $p=.010$, and Item 21: $U=89.5$, $p=.006$, each marked with an asterisk) for which NESTs and NNESTs gave significantly different ratings. According to Table 2, Item 16, “Keys to exercises and other activities,” and Item 4, “Enough detailed information on the language items to be taught,” were the most important features of a TM for NESTs; Item 3, “Clarity and explicitness of the underlying approach of the book,” was the most important feature of a TM for NNESTs.

When the evaluation criteria were reordered according to importance for both groups of teachers, the following six criteria ranked the highest (as shown by the superscript number next to the mean values in Table 2):

Table 2
Important Criteria for the Evaluation of Teacher's Manuals
for General English Skills Books

| | | NESTs (N=24) | | NNESTs (N=15) | |
|-----|---|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Comprehensibility to all teachers from more experienced to less experienced | 3.83 ² | 1.11 | 4.13 ⁵ | 0.92 |
| 2 | Suitability for native- and nonnative-speaker teachers | 3.63 ⁵ | 1.11 | 4.20 ⁴ | 0.86 |
| 3 | Clarity and explicitness of the underlying approach of the book | 3.83 ² | 0.99 | 4.40 ¹ | 0.74 |
| 4 | Enough detailed information on the language items to be taught | 4.17 ¹ | 0.92 | 4.07 | 0.88 |
| 5 | Enough guidance on the teaching procedures | 3.54 | 1.12 | 4.13 | 0.92 |
| 6* | Prescriptive guidance for the teachers | 2.46 | 1.08 | 3.60 | 0.91 |
| 7 | Clear objectives for each unit/lesson | 3.79 ³ | 1.22 | 3.87 | 0.99 |
| 8 | Intelligible explanation of new language items in terms of their form and meaning use | 3.83 ² | 1.21 | 4.27 ³ | 0.70 |
| 9 | Outline plans for each unit/lesson | 2.91 | 1.25 | 3.07 | 1.33 |
| 10 | Clear explanation of teaching procedures | 3.21 | 1.32 | 3.47 | 0.83 |
| 11 | Prediction of learning difficulties of learners and advice on those difficulties | 3.61 | 1.17 | 3.67 | 1.18 |
| 12 | Enough cultural explanation when necessary | 3.33 | 0.85 | 3.80 | 0.86 |
| 13 | Easy matching of the contents between the teacher's book and the textbook | 3.71 ⁴ | 1.17 | 4.07 | 0.70 |
| 14 | Advice given on informal monitoring of students | 2.92 | 1.19 | 3.33 | 1.05 |
| 15 | Advice on using correction techniques | 3.17 | 1.24 | 3.67 | 1.05 |
| 16 | Keys to exercises and other activities | 4.17 ¹ | 1.11 | 4.20 ⁴ | 0.94 |
| 17* | Regular progress tests | 3.21 | 1.04 | 4.13 ⁵ | 0.99 |
| 18 | Advice on how to assess students' improvement | 3.83 ² | 1.14 | 4.07 | 1.03 |
| 19 | Positively contributing to the students' motivation to improve pronunciation | 3.83 ² | 0.85 | 4.33 ² | 0.72 |
| 20 | Encouragement of the teachers to note down their own ideas in the teacher's manual | 2.59 | 1.30 | 3.40 | 1.12 |
| 21* | Guidelines for evaluating how well lessons went | 2.67 | 0.90 | 3.73 | 1.10 |

Note. These criteria were not responded to by all participants; therefore, the number of participants does not add up to 44; Likert scale: 1 = *not important at all*, 2 = *not so important*, 3 = *important*, 4 = *very important*, 5 = *extremely important*.

1. Comprehensibility to all teachers from more experienced to less experienced;
2. Suitability for native- and nonnative-speaker teachers;
3. Clarity and explicitness of the underlying approach of the book;
4. Intelligible explanation of new language items in terms of their form and meaning use;
5. Keys to exercises and other activities;
6. Positively contributing to the students' motivation to improve pronunciation.

Table 3 is a more focused list of TMs evaluation criteria since it is limited to the TMs designed for pronunciation teaching. An interesting fact about these criteria is that NNESTs rated five of these criteria significantly higher than the NESTs. The only criterion they rated equally is Item 1, "Providing a glossary showing the words in phonetic symbols."

Table 3 shows that the most important feature of a TM for NESTs was "Providing brief information on the differences of English varieties used in the book" (Item 7), while the most important feature for NNESTs was "Providing the pronunciation of important words in audio format" (Item 3). According to the results of a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*) in the survey, NNESTs ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.20$) were shown to use online dictionaries significantly more than the NESTs ($M=2.66$, $SD=1.02$). NESTs' not depending on hearing the pronunciation of words as much as NNESTs do may account for this difference. However, as seen in Table 3, NESTs are more interested in hearing the differences in pronunciation.

NESTs and NNESTs reported different reasons for needing audio. Some NNESTs believed that it was better for the students to listen to native English speakers, and some raised concerns about their own pronunciation and did not want to be the model speaker. One of the NNESTs said, "I am not a NS—I admit that I try to give more better sample sounding" (Alya). Another NNEST said, "Audio files pronounced by native speakers, I also need reference for myself—I'm not a NS so I may not know how to pronounce" (Mia). One of the NNESTs even said that she recorded her native English-speaking friends if there was not audio available (Ginny). NESTs were interested in audio because they wanted to provide variability to their learners and some wanted to set up realistic goals. One of the NESTs was in favor of having intelligible nonnative speakers as model speakers in the audio files and said, "I don't think it's reasonable for my students to sound like me" (Aurora). Another NEST, who speaks in a standard Scottish ac-

Table 3
Important Criteria for the Evaluation of Teacher's Manuals
Designed for Pronunciation Teaching

| | | <i>NESTs</i> (N=24) | | <i>NNEST</i> (N=15) | |
|---|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| | | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| 1 | Providing a glossary showing the words in phonetic symbols | 3.04 | 1.40 | 3.20 | 1.26 |
| 2 | Providing the pronunciation of each word in audio format | 2.63 | 0.90 | 3.87 | 1.25 |
| 3 | Providing the pronunciation of important words in audio format | 3.00 | 1.08 | 4.33 | 0.98 |
| 4 | Providing the definition of less frequently used words | 2.22 | 1.14 | 3.20 | 0.94 |
| 5 | Providing various pronunciations of each word in the case that there is more than one pronunciation in different accents of English | 3.17 | 0.76 | 4.00 | 1.20 |
| 6 | Providing various pronunciations of the words that are commonly known to be pronounced differently in different accents of English | 3.22 | 0.98 | 4.00 | 1.13 |
| 7 | Providing brief information on the differences of English varieties used in the book | 3.50 | 0.91 | 4.13 | 0.74 |

Note. These criteria were not responded to by all participants; therefore, the number of participants does not add up to 44; Likert scale: 1 = *not important at all*, 2 = *not so important*, 3 = *important*, 4 = *very important*, 5 = *extremely important*.

cent, needed audio recordings because she did not know how to use her own accent with the materials that were available to her. Considering these reasons, it is understandable that NESTs were more interested in hearing the words in other varieties, whereas NNESTs were more interested in knowing the basic pronunciation of the words.

When teachers were interviewed about what they expected from a TM designed for pronunciation teaching, both groups emphasized the importance of guidance; thus, it is clear they expected some support from the TM (see Table 4). Both groups of teachers expected it to provide background knowledge on the pronunciation feature being introduced and to explain why it is important to teach it. Several

Table 4
Expectations of TMs Accompanying Pronunciation Books

| <i>NESTs</i> (N=9) | <i>NNESTs</i> (N=8) |
|---|---|
| <p>Overall Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background knowledge on the pronunciation features introduced and their importance for L2 pronunciation • possible difficulties of students of different first language (L1) backgrounds • rationale for the book • possible differences between the English varieties used in the book and the variety spoken by the teacher of the course | <p>Overall Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background knowledge on the pronunciation features introduced and their importance for L2 pronunciation • possible difficulties of students of different L1 backgrounds • relationship between various pronunciation features such as word stress, prominence, thought groups, and intonation |
| <p>Pedagogical Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to teach? • How to teach? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teaching tips: how to introduce pronunciation features in a clear and simple way ○ demonstration of activities ○ suggestions about what to do if students do not get a pronunciation feature ○ where to integrate pronunciation features in a more general speaking or English course | <p>Pedagogical Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to teach? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teaching tips: how to introduce pronunciation features in a clear and simple way ○ demonstration of activities ○ how to correct pronunciation errors ○ how much time to spend on each pronunciation feature |
| <p>Guidance on the Exercises in the Book</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale for the activities in the book • how to exploit the activities in the book • explanations about what kind of practice is important • explanations about why students are right or wrong with their choices in an exercise • extended activities that can be used as examples or homework • answer key | <p>Guidance on the Exercises in the Book</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale for the activities in the book • how to exploit the activities in the book • interesting exercises • a sufficient number of exercises • guided activities • answer key |
| <p>Links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • videos for students • videos demonstrating teaching techniques • additional sources, printed and online | |
| <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA and phonetic transcription help • diagrams showing the articulatory organs • diagnostic tasks • easy-to-follow layout • accessibility | <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA and phonetic transcription help • diagrams showing the articulatory organs |

teachers from both groups stated that providing the background knowledge is important because not every teacher is trained in pronunciation. One of the NNESTs said, “I had a colleague who did not know what a schwa was the first time she taught pronunciation” (Evie). Another NEST supported the provision of background knowledge because she said:

The truth is that even though I’m a native speaker, I still need those resources due to my background in training. So, I’ve received training in the form of basically one class. One pronunciation training class and I got involved in research that helped me understand pronunciation. But beyond that, I haven’t had a lot of training. (Clementine)

In addition to background knowledge on pronunciation features, both groups of teachers expected to find a brief explanation on the possible pronunciation problems of students of various L1 backgrounds. NESTs also expected an explanation about the rationale of the book and possible differences between the English variety used in the book and the variety that might be spoken by the teacher of the pronunciation course. Some NNESTs asked for the explanation of the relationship between various pronunciation features, especially suprasegmental features, to see how they all fit together in the bigger picture.

Both groups of teachers expected pedagogical suggestions from the TM. NESTs were interested in learning the authors’ perspective about what is important to teach, that is, what the teaching priorities are in terms of the effect they would create on students’ intelligibility. They were also interested in suggestions about how to teach pronunciation, which was the case for NNESTs as well. Both groups of teachers wanted to see teaching tips and if possible, demonstration of activities showing how to teach a given pronunciation feature.

Both groups of teachers expected suggestions about how to correct students’ pronunciation problems, especially if they had problems in understanding and producing certain features. NESTs stated that it would be nice to have some suggestions about where to fit pronunciation teaching in if they do not teach a stand-alone pronunciation course and a NNEST was interested in knowing how much time should be spent on teaching each pronunciation feature.

Many teachers in both groups expressed a need for guidance on the exercises. Some said that one of the reasons they did not like some TMs they had used before was that they were confused about what to do in certain exercises, and the book authors had not explained the

intention of the exercises or ideas to exploit them. Therefore, teachers asked for suggestions on how to exploit the exercises and what their importance was in teaching a pronunciation point. Some teachers wanted to see a brief explanation about the possible answers students might give and why they would be right or wrong. One of the NESTs, Emma, said:

The students want to know why they're getting things wrong or right and they look to the teacher for explanation as to why they're wrong and what is the answer and how they can improve so a teacher needs to be able to give that explanation and mostly teacher's books do not give that explanation; they give answers and that's it. So an explanation, a prioritized simplified explanation, would be very handy. Not lengthy, not you know heavy in metalanguage but a simple and clear and concise.

In addition to overall guidance, pedagogical suggestions, and guidance on the exercises in the book, some teachers expected to be given links to reliable sources, help on phonetic transcription, diagrams showing articulatory organs, diagnostic tasks, easy-to-follow layout, and ease of accessibility.

Teachers' Thoughts About a PTM and an OTM

The second research question was "What are native and nonnative English-speaking teachers' impressionistic evaluations about a printed versus an online teacher's manual accompanying a pronunciation book?" This question involves the evaluation of sample materials. Five NESTs and three NNESTs volunteered to evaluate the prototypical units of a PTM and OTM developed by the researcher.

When one looks at the recurring themes in the interviews, it is apparent that teachers commented more on the OTM (see Tables 5, 6, and 7). Most of the teachers mentioned the design, layout, and multimodality-related features to be the strength of the OTM. The most frequently mentioned design feature of the OTM by both groups of teachers was the ease of navigation. Teachers found the manual user friendly and transparent. Two NNESTs described it to be "more fun" and two other NNESTs found it to be "more engaging."

As for the layout of the OTM, many NESTs and NNESTs liked the presentation of content in the accordion boxes (see Figure 1), which could be expanded and collapsed by clicking on them. One of the NESTs said that she found the text in the PTM overwhelming but not the text in the OTM, and her explanation was:

Table 5
Strengths of the OTM

| <i>Strengths</i> | <i>NESTs</i> | <i>NNESTs</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | (N=5) | (N=3) |
| | <i># comments</i> | <i># comments</i> |
| Layout features | 9 | 4 |
| Design features | 6 | 7 |
| Presentation of pronunciation | 7 | 4 |
| Multimodality | 2 | 2 |
| Video features | 4 | 3 |
| Audio features | 6 | 4 |
| PDF | 3 | |
| Phonetic transcription | 1 | 1 |
| Students' use | 3 | 3 |
| Accessibility | 1 | 1 |
| Exercises | | 2 |

Note. Teachers could comment on multiple features. These were later combined into the categories. For this reason, the number of comments may be greater than the number of teachers.

I like the accordion boxes. I like the way the information was decorated into like when for the rationale part you put it into different like one paragraph at a time. You could click on and just read that paragraph. At first I thought that is a bit overkill but in fact rather than being faced with a lot of big words or a big lot to do you ended up reading each little bit. And I think you click each little bit and got it. I think that was good. (Ast)

A NNEST noted the same benefit of the accordion boxes by saying, “Small window of content. So less overwhelming presentation of information” (Minnie).

One of the NESTs, Wolverine, raised a concern about accordion boxes, thinking they might be complicated for people who are not good with technology. However, another NEST who defined himself as an older-generation teacher said, “I find them easy. Um, I mean I have seen them in a few other programs, um, I am used to that. So that that was fine” (Ged). Accordion boxes were mostly easy to figure out for teachers, but a NEST still had one criticism. She said the titles of the accordion boxes, especially the exercises titles, did not always tell

much about what they had in them; therefore, one would need to click and look to see the content.

Another layout feature, which teachers liked with no exception, was the side-by-side presentation of student's material and the TM (see Figure 1). Teachers found this feature to be time saving and less complicated. Teachers liked the design and layout of the OTM in general, but many teachers criticized certain features. For instance, there were no visual icons for audio and video components. There were two instructional videos in the OTM, but most teachers noticed only one of the videos and they did not notice there was another one until the researcher talked about them in the TM evaluation interview. Most of the teachers recommended creating an icon for those types of components.

Although it was not very easy to notice the two videos in the OTM, the videos made some teachers like the OTM very much, even the teachers who said that they would typically go with printed materials. One of those NESTs said, "Videos are very useful; ultimately it's (pronunciation) physical over cognitive so you need to actually demonstrate what's happening" (Ged). Another NEST stated, "Not everybody likes to read text. It's helpful to hear someone explain it" (Wolverine). Kitty Kat, a NEST, said she would prefer the OTM because of the videos. NNESTs shared their positive feelings about the videos and one of them defined videos to be "last-minute training from a phonetics expert before going into the classroom" (Minnie). Another NNEST thought these videos would be helpful for his students as well, so he would have them watch the videos in class.

For the audio component of the OTM, all words in all exercises and the content explanations were clickable so that teachers could click and hear the words. Most teachers in both groups liked this feature since they would not need to worry about carrying a CD or matching the audio files with the relevant exercises. One of the NESTs said, "It's not that I'd choose that (online manual) over the printed stuff, it's purely, obviously the audio is online" (Emma). Another NEST said, "It's just amazing being able to just click anywhere there is an example and you just hear it" (Ast).

Three NESTs said that it would be useful to have PDFs of each page in the OTM since there might be some people who would like to use printed materials. One of these teachers said she would prefer using the OTM but the PTM could be a good backup in the cases that she did not have access to the OTM (Emma). Another NEST supported Emma's point by saying that he worked in an environment where lots of lightning occurred and he had Internet issues; therefore, he did not think the OTM would be reliable all the time.

Some teachers found other features of the OTM useful although they did not occur more than once or twice in the data. Two NESTs thought the OTM would be a great self-study source for students although they had been told that the OTM was not meant to be used by students. A NEST and NNEST also said that the OTM was more accessible than the PTM in many situations. Teachers were asked which manual they would prefer to use if they were asked to teach with the given student material, and six of eight teachers said they would prefer the online one because of some of the features reported above.

Although most teachers preferred using the OTM, they noted some weaknesses that could be improved (see Table 6). Some of these have been already mentioned and were mostly related to design issues. However, there were some other issues teachers wanted addressed. Most of the NESTs asked for more explanations and rationales for exercises and teaching components. For instance, an exercise in the word stress unit asks learners to retell a fable they worked on starting from the warm-up. Some teachers asked for more explanations as to why it is important for learners to work on this exercise. Another example teachers mentioned was an exercise in the segmentals chapter in which there are multiple-choice questions and each answer can be correct depending on the context. The TM tells teachers that each option is equally correct for all questions, but it does not explain why. Thus, one of the teachers said, “No correct answers for Exercise 6 in segmentals. I understand there is no correct answer but new teachers may be a little bit prescriptive. I really think some answers would be helpful” (Wolverine).

Table 6
Weaknesses of the OTM

| <i>Weaknesses</i> | <i>NESTs (N=5)</i> | <i>NNESTs (N=3)</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | <i># comments</i> | <i># comments</i> |
| Rationale and explanations | 7 | |
| Layout | 3 | |
| Design | 15 | 1 |
| Feedback | 2 | |
| Video | 2 | 3 |
| Audio | 2 | |
| Visuals | 2 | |
| Research | 2 | |
| External reasons | 1 | |

A similar comment came from another NEST for another exercise in the segmentals unit, in which students are asked to write the phonetics symbols used in the student's material and write any other symbol that is used to represent the same sound. The teacher said, "I looked in the teacher's part there, and there wasn't very much there in terms of why this was happening. Is this kind of an awareness raising activity?" (Emma). The same comment also came from another NEST: "Why do I have to do both sets of symbols? What is the rationale?" (Ast). This teacher asked for a rationale for the vowel and consonant charts as well; she thought some teachers might need to be told why they would need the charts.

Most of the comments about the videos and audios were about design features, but some were about the content. Some teachers suggested using videos more as a teacher-training tool. One of the NESTs suggested extending the videos and creating classroom episodes using particular techniques in class. He said,

Demonstrate the activities. It would depend on the kind of the audience really. Kind of what their competence was, what they are expecting. I mean I work with some quite new teachers and so they have got a very low level of competence. ... They would be able to say what a consonant was, and what a vowel was, but they wouldn't know a difference between them. (Ged)

As shown in Table 7, a few themes emerged regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the PTM obtained from the interview data. In fact, most of the positive or negative comments teachers made for the PTM would be valid for the OTM as well since the content of two manuals is the same.

As the data show, teachers liked many features of the OTM although there were several things to be improved. There were things teachers liked about the PTM as well but most teachers preferred to use the OTM if they were to teach with the given student's material. The reason for their preference was mostly the design features of the OTM. All those features, such as creating clickable words, including interactive phonetic charts, and incorporating instructional videos, are possible because of current technology. It would not be possible to create those in a printed manual.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study showed that five criteria among the 21 presented in the initial survey (Cunningsworth, 1995) were very important for both NESTs and NNESTs when they described their expectations from a TM. These features are related to:

Table 7
Strengths and Weaknesses of the PTM

| | <i>NESTs (N=5)</i> | <i>NNESTs (N=3)</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Strengths</i> | <i># comments</i> | <i># comments</i> |
| Presentation of information | 4 | 1 |
| Rationale | 1 | 2 |
| Design | 2 | 2 |
| Layout | 2 | 2 |
| Exercises | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Weaknesses</i> | | |
| Audio | 3 | 1 |
| Layout | 2 | |
| Design | | 3 |

1. The explanation of the approach of the book;
2. Intelligible explanations of language items;
3. Provision of an answer key;
4. Comprehensibility; and
5. Suitability for the teachers with different experiences and language backgrounds.

Results obtained from teachers' interviews support their survey answers since both NESTs and NNESTs expect a TM to present background knowledge on the pronunciation feature being introduced. They also expected to be given pedagogical suggestions as to what to prioritize in pronunciation teaching and how to teach pronunciation features. Additionally, the results showed that teachers wanted to see more detailed explanations about the exercises provided for students. They not only want to have an answer key but also suggestions about how to explain why certain answers are right or wrong in an exercise. These findings are echoed by Kim (2015), who used the same criteria to investigate preservice and in-service English teachers' expectations from TMs. His findings showed that clear objectives for each unit/lesson were the most important feature for preservice teachers, whereas for in-service teachers the most important feature was regular progress tests.

Findings of the study related to teachers' thoughts about a PTM and an OTM indicated that neither NESTs nor NNESTs disliked the PTM, but they preferred the OTM because of its layout, design, audio,

and video content. Many teachers from both groups liked the side-by-side presentation of the student's materials and the teacher's manual in the OTM, because they did not need to worry about matching up the content. Clickable words and the two instructional videos were among the features that some teachers named as clear reasons for preferring the OTM. Six out of eight teachers preferred the OTM, and the two who preferred the printed one stated that they liked printed materials better because printed materials gave them a sense of reliability; that is, external problems such as power loss or a device forgotten at home would not affect their usability. Although most teachers liked the OTM better than the PTM, the OTM was not flawless in their opinion. Teachers suggested a few ideas to improve the quality of the OTM so that it could be more helpful in supporting teachers.

Although there was need for improvement in the OTM that the teachers evaluated in this study, the way teachers reacted to it still shows that an OTM might be a good way of meeting the needs of pronunciation teachers. Considering the nature of pronunciation skills and the advancements of technology, this study should encourage materials developers to design materials incorporating technology into TMs. An OTM can be accessible and practical. Issues such as cross-referencing, running out of space, and providing multimedia components are easily overcome with an online manual. Taking the suggestions of the target population into consideration, materials developers can produce better TMs encouraging teachers to teach pronunciation skills with higher confidence. Additionally, with the feedback received from the teachers, an OTM can always be updated without needing a second edition of a TM in which problems are fixed.

This study is not without limitations, which can be addressed in future research. Teachers in this study did not teach pronunciation with *Pronunciation for a Purpose*, which is the student's book that both TMs in the study were designed for. Therefore, their evaluations of the PTM and OTM are based on their impressions of them, rather than actually using them in a classroom. In a future study, teachers could be asked to teach with the student's book and use the TMs in their teaching practices. Another limitation is that there is not much research on teachers' expectations from TMs. As of now, there is only one research study (Kim, 2015) in which teachers were asked about the importance of TM evaluation criteria. There is a need for studies exploring the importance of the TM criteria, and even for creating more targeted criteria evaluating the TMs accompanying the books designed for specific language skills. There is also a need for studies analyzing current TMs to see how well they meet certain criteria.

Author

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