

Materials Used in EFL Pronunciation Teaching in Finland

Bachelor's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Ääntämisen opetus nähdään usein ongelmallisena osa-alueena kielten opetuksessa. Muita kielen osa-alueita, kuten kielioppia, pidetään hyödyllisempänä kuin ääntämistä, minkä takia ääntämisen opetukseen ei usein jää tarpeeksi aikaa. Ääntämisen rooli kielten opetuksessa väheni erityisesti kommunikatiivisen lähestymistavan kehityksen myötä, sillä kommunikatiivinen lähestymistapa ei tarjonnut vastineita perinteisille ääntämisen opetuksen menetelmille. Vieraan kielen opetuksessa, joka korostaa sujuvan kommunikaation merkitystä, on kuitenkin olennaista tähdätä ymmärrettävään ääntämiseen. Suurimmat ongelmat ääntämisen opetuksessa johtuvat ajan ja materiaalien puutteesta. Aiempi tutkimus on myös havainnut, että opettajat eivät ole tyytyväisiä siihen, kuinka ääntämisen opetus huomioidaan opettajankoulutuksessa.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma pyrki selvittämään, mitä materiaaleja ääntämisen opetuksessa käytetään ja miksi. Tavoitteena oli myös saada selville, millä tavoin opettajat hankkivat tai suunnittelevat materiaaleja ääntämisen opetukseen. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin kyselyn avulla. Kyselyyn osallistui 27 opettajaa, jotka opettivat englantia Suomessa joko alakoulussa, yläkoulussa tai lukiossa. Tulokset osoittivat, että ääntämisen opetukseen käytetään suhteellisen niukasti erilaisia materiaaleja oppikirjojen lisäksi. Suurimmat syyt lisämateriaalien käytölle liittyivät puutteisiin oppikirjoissa sekä haluun lisätä vaihtelua oppitunneille. Materiaalien suunnittelussa ja etsimisessä erityisen tärkeäksi raportoitiin autenttisuus ja erilaiset aksentit. Erityisinä ongelmina materiaalien hankintaan liittyen nousi esiin ajan ja sopivien materiaalien puute.</p> <p>Näiden tulosten avulla voidaan todeta, että ääntämisen asema kieltenopetuksessa on jokseenkin laiminlyöty. Suuri osa materiaaleista, joiden avulla ääntämistä voitaisiin opettaa, jää käyttämättä. Tulokset nostavat siis esiin tärkeitä huomioita siitä, millaiset valmiudet ja mahdollisuudet opettajilla on hyödyntää erilaisia materiaaleja monipuolisesti ääntämisen opetuksessa.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language teaching today aims for successful communication, which depends on understanding others' speech and being understood. Intelligible communication is affected by different areas of a language, such as grammar, semantics and pronunciation (Levis, 2018, pp. 11-12). Therefore, learning pronunciation is an important part of learning to communicate intelligibly in a foreign language. The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, pp. 219-220, 348) emphasizes the role of English as a language for international communication and recognizes the importance of pronunciation teaching. English pronunciation teaching for Finnish learners is especially important, since Finnish has a “nearly phonetic writing system”, meaning that a certain letter almost always corresponds to one specific sound (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 15). This is not the case in English, and therefore it is not obvious to Finnish L1 speakers how English is pronounced (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 15).

Studies show that teachers find pronunciation problematic to teach, as they feel that they receive insufficient training on how to teach pronunciation, the materials available in textbooks are inadequate and there is not enough time to focus on pronunciation (Georgiou, 2019; Ostovar Namaghi et al., 2014). Other areas of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, are often seen as more important than pronunciation, which is possibly the cause of a majority of the aforementioned problems related to pronunciation teaching (Georgiou, 2019; Ostovar Namaghi et al., 2014).

Similar results have been found in the Finnish context, as studies suggest that teachers are discontent by how pronunciation is addressed in teacher training (Tergujeff, 2012), and textbooks prioritize other aspects of language over pronunciation (Mäkinen, 2021). As mentioned by Tergujeff (2013), textbooks often guide the content of language teaching in Finland as they offer the main materials used by teachers. However, teachers complement the materials provided in textbooks with additional materials such as songs, poems and videos (Mäkinen, 2021). The reasons for using additional materials for pronunciation teaching as well as teachers' abilities to utilize the great variety of possible materials are still unclear. Therefore, more information about the use of additional materials in pronunciation teaching is needed. This study aims to find out which additional materials are used in pronunciation teaching by Finnish EFL teachers and how they are used, as well as why and how Finnish EFL teachers choose or design additional materials.

2. BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I will discuss the role of pronunciation in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching on an international level as well as in the Finnish context. I will also discuss different materials, especially textbooks, that are used for teaching pronunciation. It is also relevant to examine how well textbooks cover pronunciation based on previous research, as this is something that possibly affects how teachers choose and design additional teaching materials.

2.1. Pronunciation in English language teaching

Learning pronunciation is an important part of learning to communicate intelligibly in a foreign language. It not only affects the learner's ability to be understood but also to understand others (Levis, 2018, p. 1). However, the role of pronunciation in EFL teaching has fluctuated greatly, depending on the dominant theoretical ideologies at different times. During the mid-20th century and the rise of the audiolingual method, pronunciation teaching was seen as one of the first priorities, and it was practiced through imitation, repetition and drills (Derwing & Munro, 2012, p. 21). The latter part of the 20th century saw the development of communicative language teaching, which initially led to pronunciation teaching losing popularity (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 22). Although pronunciation has a significant role in intelligible communication, research on pronunciation teaching in Finland is a somewhat neglected area of study (Tergujeff, 2012; Tergujeff, 2013). However, it seems that the topic has gained some popularity in recent years. In Finland, language teaching mostly follows the communicative approach. The model for pronunciation teaching is usually British Received Pronunciation or General American, although learners are introduced to different varieties of English (Tergujeff, 2013).

Until the 1960s, the goal of pronunciation teaching was native-like pronunciation (Levis, 2005). The nativeness principle emphasized the importance of native-like pronunciation and considered it as an achievable goal for EFL learners (Levis, 2005). However, after it was discovered that most adult learners are in fact not able to achieve the same level of pronunciation as a native speaker, the intelligibility principle started replacing the nativeness principle as an appropriate goal (Levis, 2005). The intelligibility principle holds that the focus is on being understood and understanding other speakers (Levis, 2018, p. 33). Instead of aiming for foreign accent reduction, as is the goal of the nativeness principle, the intelligibility principle emphasizes that communication can be successful despite different kinds of accents (Levis, 2005). Intelligibility can be understood as a

wide term that also includes comprehensibility. Therefore, it not only refers to how well the speaker is understood but also how much effort it takes for the listener to understand the speaker (Levis, 2018, p. 12). Pronunciation teaching that follows the intelligibility principle focuses on features that affect how well the speaker is understood (Levis, 2005). It seems that the intelligibility principle guides pronunciation teaching also in Finland, since Finnish EFL teachers report their goals for pronunciation teaching to be intelligibility and smooth communication (Mäkinen, 2021).

Pronunciation can be examined on two levels, segmental and suprasegmental, which are both important for intelligible communication. Segmentals refer to the sounds of vowels and consonants, also called phonemes, in a language, while suprasegmentals refer to aspects such as rhythm and intonation (Levis, 2018, p. 61). Both of these have an impact on intelligibility, and errors on either level can lead to misunderstandings (Levis, 2018, p. 82). This is also considered in the aims stated in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 220), which emphasizes the communicative approach and both suprasegmental as well as segmental level of pronunciation. It is stated that students should be provided with knowledge of intonation, word and sentence stress, speech rhythm and phonetic symbols (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, p. 220). The goal for language proficiency in English is generally to have achieved the CEFR-level B1.1 by the end of year 9 of basic education (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, pp. 351-352). The CEFR-level B1 in regard to overall phonological control requires generally intelligible speech with mostly appropriate intonation, while other languages the learner speaks can have a noticeable influence on their accent (Council of Europe, 2020, p.134)

Research shows that other aspects of languages, such as grammar, are prioritized over pronunciation in EFL teaching in Finland and elsewhere. A study conducted in Cyprus showed that teachers feel that pronunciation is not seen as important, and the time and materials available for teaching pronunciation are insufficient (Georgiou, 2019). Another study, conducted in Iran, showed that teachers do not find the materials provided in textbooks sufficient for teaching pronunciation (Ostovar Namaghi et. al., 2014). The results reflect those of studies conducted in the Finnish context. The two main reasons for not prioritizing pronunciation in teaching are lack of time and materials (Mäkinen, 2021). A significant factor in the role of pronunciation in foreign language teaching is also the training that teachers receive. According to Georgiou (2019), teachers feel that teaching pronunciation is difficult, and they do not receive enough feedback and instruction on how to teach pronunciation. Similar results have been found in the Finnish context. Tergujeff (2012)

states that teachers feel that they do not receive sufficient training on how to teach pronunciation, and younger teachers may be more discontent with the training. It is possible that pronunciation is not addressed to the same extent in teacher training since attitudes towards traditional pronunciation teaching methods changed with the rise of communicative language teaching (Tergujeff, 2012).

2.2. EFL pronunciation teaching materials

As discussed above, the materials available affect how pronunciation is taught in classrooms. Textbooks are possibly one of the most important sources for teaching materials. In Finland, the content of language teaching is greatly affected by textbooks, and they offer the main material used for pronunciation teaching, as mentioned by Tergujeff (2013). Mäkinen (2021) examined pronunciation exercises in different English textbooks aimed for Finnish primary, secondary and upper secondary schools. The amount of pronunciation exercises in general was relatively low, being highest in beginner level textbooks and lowest in advanced level textbooks (Mäkinen, 2021). It also seems that certain aspects of pronunciation are prioritized over others. The amount of exercises focusing on prosody are relatively low, while those focusing on practicing single phonemes are relatively high (Mäkinen, 2021; Tergujeff, 2013). In contrast, a study conducted outside the Finnish context by Derwing et. al. (2012) found that suprasegmentals were presented slightly more than segmentals in general-skills ESL (English as a second language) textbooks. The amount and variety of pronunciation exercises naturally vary a lot depending on the textbook publisher and the local curriculum that largely guides the content in the textbooks.

Although communicative language teaching emphasizes fluency and intelligibility, pronunciation exercise types in textbooks seem to mostly follow traditional audiolingual methods. General-skills ESL books seem to utilize mostly listen and repeat exercises as well as listening and noticing a certain feature to address pronunciation (Derwing et. al. 2012). As Derwing et. al. (2012) point out, a wider variety in task types would benefit the learners, since this would provide more opportunities to learn for learners with individual needs. Similar results have been found in the Finnish context, as the most common types of pronunciation exercises in textbooks are read aloud and listen and repeat exercises, focusing on mastering single sounds (Mäkinen, 2021). Mäkinen (2021) states that these are also the most commonly used methods in practice. Although exercises focusing specifically on pronunciation in textbooks rely on traditional audiolingual methods, textbooks offer plenty of general communicative oral tasks, which can be beneficial for practicing pronunciation (Tergujeff, 2013).

According to Mäkinen (2021), Finnish EFL teachers reported using online materials of textbooks, audios, videos, songs, poems and websites for pronunciation teaching in addition to textbooks. Songs and poems are particularly popular in primary schools, while audios and videos are more popular in secondary and upper secondary schools (Mäkinen, 2021). These results may reflect the lack of exercises on prosody, since rhythm and intonation are an important part of songs and poems. Poems may also bring learners' attention to sentence stress, which, according to Mäkinen (2021), was not addressed in textbooks. Furthermore, Tergujeff (2012) states that while textbooks are the most commonly used materials for pronunciation teaching, a majority of teachers also use, for example, CDs, DVDs and websites. The possibilities for pronunciation teaching materials are extensive. For example, all kinds of audio, such as podcasts, interviews, music and movies provide authentic material that can be utilized in pronunciation teaching, while Lego blocks, rubber bands and mirrors can be used to visualize pronunciation (Tergujeff, forthcoming). A large variety of materials can help motivate and activate the students as well as offer them possibilities to choose materials that best suit their individual needs (Tergujeff, forthcoming).

2.3. Teachers' conceptions of pronunciation teaching materials

Several studies indicate that teachers do not find the pronunciation exercises in textbooks adequate for pronunciation teaching. According to Mäkinen (2021), teachers wish there were more materials for teaching prosody and differences in accents as well as more variety in the materials. On the other hand, teachers are satisfied with, for example, the use of phonetic symbols and clear themes in textbooks (Mäkinen, 2021). In a study conducted by Ostovar Namaghi et. al. (2014), teachers stated that pronunciation exercises in textbooks focused only on stress in single, isolated words.

Pronunciation is practiced in isolation from other aspects of a language, which makes it difficult for learners to understand the role of pronunciation in relation to other language skills (Ostovar Namaghi et. al., 2014). In conclusion, it seems that textbooks have a rather limited variety of pronunciation exercises. The exercises are not put into context, and learners have few opportunities to practice pronunciation in continuous speech.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that textbooks do not sufficiently cover pronunciation. However, textbooks are not the only source of materials for pronunciation teaching. With a little bit of creativity, a wide variety of audios, videos, games and other tools can be utilized in pronunciation teaching (Tergujeff, forthcoming). In fact, according to Mäkinen (2021) and

Tergujeff (2012), teachers use a variety of materials in addition to textbooks for teaching pronunciation. The present study aims to examine which materials are used by Finnish EFL teachers to teach pronunciation, as well as why and how teachers acquire materials in addition to textbooks.

3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1. Research aims and questions

Previous research indicates that teachers are somewhat dissatisfied with the pronunciation exercises in textbooks. This study aims to find out what kinds of additional materials teachers use for pronunciation teaching, why and how they use additional materials, as well as how they design or acquire these materials. The aims can be divided into three research questions:

1. What kind of materials do teachers use for teaching pronunciation?
2. Why do teachers choose additional materials for pronunciation teaching?
3. How do teachers design or acquire additional materials for teaching pronunciation?

3.2. Data and Data collection

The data was collected through a questionnaire (Appendix 1), aimed for primary, secondary and upper secondary school English teachers in Finland. No other requirements were set for participants. The participants were contacted through a Facebook group called “Englannin opettajat”, which consists of English language teachers in Finland. The questionnaire was sent to the Facebook group twice in February 2024. The questionnaire could be accessed through a link, and no personal information was needed from the participants. Therefore, the questionnaire was completely anonymous. As background questions, the teachers were asked which grades they teach and which books they use for teaching. The rest of the questions focused on the type of the additional materials, how the materials are used, the process of designing or finding materials and the problems that teachers may face when finding or designing materials for pronunciation teaching.

The questionnaire was designed and completed using Webropol, an online platform for questionnaire surveys. Different kinds of question types were used, including multiple-choice

questions and open-ended questions. This ensured comparable data while also allowing the participants to express their views and experiences in more detail and add their own answers that were not included among answer options (Denscombe, 2014, p. 176). The questionnaire consisted of nine questions, five of which were multiple-choice questions with a possibility to expand the answer with an open-ended answer. Participants were expected to answer all questions, except questions 4 and 5, which were only for those who designed their own materials for pronunciation teaching. However, it was possible to turn in the questionnaire without answering all of the questions, as none of them were marked as obligatory.

The questionnaire was completed by 27 participants, 16 of whom teach in primary schools, 12 in lower secondary schools and 4 in upper secondary schools. The participants were asked which books they use for teaching as background information. Ten of the elementary school teachers use *Go for it!* (Sanoma Pro, 2024a), three use *High Five!* (Otava, n.d.a.), two *Come with me!* (Sanoma Pro, 2024b) and one *Jump In!* (Otava, n.d.b.). Of the lower secondary school teachers six use *On the Go* (Sanoma Pro, 2024c), four use *Scene* (Otava, n.d.c.), four *Level up* (Sanoma Pro, 2024d) and one *Spotlight* (Sanoma Pro, 2024e). Of the upper secondary school teachers, each uses a different book, namely *Insights* (Otava, n.d.d.), *Elements* (Sanoma Pro, 2024f) and *Studeo* (Studeo, n.d.), as well as one participant reporting only using own materials.

A questionnaire was chosen to be a suitable method for the present study, as the aim was to gather straightforward information for an identical set of questions from a large group of people (Denscombe, 2014, p. 167). This method was chosen over, for example, interviews, since the questions did not require in depth and detailed information about the participants feelings and experiences (Denscombe, 2014, p. 186). The present study is also a rather small-scale study, which is why a questionnaire was the most effective way to gather information (Denscombe, 2014, p. 185). The data was collected through a self-completion questionnaire, which is a questionnaire the participants answered to on their own in their own time (Denscombe, 2014, p. 167). The questions were rather simple with little field-specific terminology, so the participants were expected to be able to fill the questionnaire independently online. The present study did not require the participants to share personal or possibly controversial information, which is important in order to get honest answers (Denscombe, 2014, p. 167). The only exception to this may have been question 9, which was about the problems teachers have faced when designing or acquiring additional materials. The answers to this question included options such as “I feel that I do not have enough knowledge about the topic”.

3.3. Methods of analysis

As the questions included both closed and open-ended questions, the analysis required quantitative and qualitative methods (Denscombe, 2014, pp. 250, 277). The multiple-choice questions were analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics by calculating relative frequencies of the answer options. Answers to the open-ended questions were categorized in order to quantify the data (Denscombe, 2014, p. 283). The questions 4, 5 and 6 required the participants to describe what kinds of materials they design themselves and how, as well as how they use different kinds of materials in pronunciation teaching. The answers to the open-ended questions 4, 5 and 6 were categorized in order to find common themes from the answers and calculate the frequency of these themes (Denscombe, 2014, p. 284). The answers to the open-ended questions that allowed the participants to write an answer that was not included among the answer options in the multiple-choice questions were not categorized, as there were only one or two answers to each of the questions. These answers were analyzed in a similar way to the other answer options of the multiple-choice questions.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Materials used for pronunciation teaching

The participants indicated the materials they use for teaching pronunciation in question 3. The results are listed in Table 1. Everyone who reported using a textbook, that is every participant except one, also uses it for pronunciation teaching. Textbooks are clearly the most commonly used materials for pronunciation teaching, as 96% of the participants use them. The other most commonly used materials are YouTube-videos (63%), music (30%) and materials that the participants have designed themselves (26%). The most seldom chosen answer options included stories (0%), plays (4%), pronunciation textbooks (7%) and materials received from in-service training (7%). Two participants answered to the open-ended question “something else”, one of them reporting “the teacher’s own pronunciation as model” and the other reporting old teaching posters with English phonemes in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Table 1.

Answers to question 3 “Which materials do you use for teaching pronunciation?” reported by Finnish EFL teachers (n=27)

Answer option	n	%
Textbook	26	96 %
YouTube-videos	17	63 %
Music	8	30 %
Materials designed by the participant	7	26 %
Websites meant for teaching purposes	6	22 %
Other websites	5	19 %
Old textbooks no longer in use	5	19 %
Poems	4	15 %
TV-shows	3	11 %
Games	3	11 %
Pronunciation textbook	2	7 %
Materials from in-service training	2	7 %
Other	2	7 %
Plays	1	4 %
Stories	0	0 %

Those who design their own materials were asked which kinds of materials they design. The results are listed in Table 2. The participants mentioned presentations, recordings, tongue twisters, adaptations of speech therapy materials, texts and exercises with IPA and compilations of words or sounds that are usually hard to pronounce.

Table 2.

Answers to question 4 “What kind of materials do you design for pronunciation teaching?” reported by Finnish EFL teachers (n=7)

Answer option	n
Tongue twisters	2
Exercises with IPA	2
Recordings	1
Adaptations of speech therapy materials	1
Minimal pairs	1
LUKO-games	1
Compilations of the most common problems	1
Slide shows	1
Online exercises	1

Next, the participants were asked how the materials are used. Listen and repeat or mimicking were commonly reported methods, especially by those who use YouTube-videos and textbooks.

YouTube-videos as well as TV-shows and music are used to listen to different kinds of accents and practice distinguishing certain characteristics of specific accents. Out of the 23 participants who answered the question “How do you use the materials chosen in question 3 in teaching?”, 12 reported using them to compare or mimic different accents. Poems, texts in textbooks and YouTube-videos were mentioned to be used to listen to intonation and rhythm. Those who use music for pronunciation teaching mentioned singing along as well as listening to songs. Plays were reported to be used to practice speaking in a conversational situation. Different kinds of websites were reported to be used as platforms for designing exercises, searching for tongue twisters and listening to certain sounds. In addition to the options for materials listed by the researcher, participants reported using mirrors in order to see the position of the mouth during pronunciation exercises. Diagrams of speech organs were also mentioned to be used to demonstrate the position of the mouth.

The participants were asked why they choose additional materials for pronunciation teaching. The results are listed in Table 3. The most common reason for using materials in addition to textbooks for pronunciation teaching was the option “I want to bring variation to the lessons”, which was chosen by 81% of the participants. The option “The pronunciation exercises in textbooks do not have enough variety” was chosen by 43% of participants, while 33% reported that textbooks do not have enough pronunciation exercises in general, and 29% reported that they do not think the pronunciation exercises in textbooks are good enough. The third most common option was “I want

to focus on a specific feature in more detail”, which was chosen by 38% of the participants. No one reported any other reasons, besides the ones listed by the researcher, for why they choose to use additional materials.

Table 3.

Answers to question 7 “Why do you choose materials in addition to a textbook?” reported by Finnish EFL teachers (n=21).

Answer option	n	%
I want to bring variation to the lessons	17	81 %
The pronunciation exercises in textbooks do not have enough variety	9	43 %
I want to focus on a specific feature in more detail	8	38 %
Textbooks do not have enough pronunciation exercises	7	33 %
The pronunciation exercises in textbooks are not good enough	6	29 %

4.2. The process of designing and acquiring materials

The results for the question “What affects the choice of materials?” are listed in Table 4. The most significant factor which affects the choice of materials is authenticity, which was chosen by 78% of the participants. Factors which affect intelligibility apart from accent was the second most commonly chosen option (65%), while accent was the third most common (48%). The students’ interests and the topic of the material apart from pronunciation were chosen by 39% of the participants. Participants also described their process of choosing additional materials in relation to other questions. Based on the answers to the open-ended questions 5 and 6, teachers commonly design and choose materials which expand on the pronunciation exercises or texts in textbooks or use the materials in textbooks as a basis for materials they design themselves. Something that was also commonly mentioned in relation to many of the questions, was that it is important that designing or searching for additional materials takes little time and effort. The one participant who added their own answer to question 8 (Table 4) answered “easy to find”.

Table 4.

Answers to question 8 “What affects the choice of materials?” reported by Finnish EFL teachers (n=23).

Answer option	n	%
Authenticity	18	78 %
Features that affect intelligibility (apart from accent)	15	65 %
Accent	11	48 %
Themes discussed in the material	9	39 %
Students' interests	9	39 %
Other	1	4 %

Lastly, the participants were asked which problems they have faced when searching for or designing materials. The results are listed in Table 5. Lack of time to prioritize materials for pronunciation teaching was clearly the most commonly chosen option, chosen by 68% of the participants. The second most common problem was that there is not enough material that would be suitable for teaching purposes (32%), while the lack of variety in materials suitable for teaching was chosen by 21% of participants. The option “I feel that I do not have enough knowledge about the topic” was chosen by 16% of the participants and one participant reported feeling insecure about whether certain materials are suitable for practicing specific areas of pronunciation. One participant also answered the open-ended question “something else?”, reporting lack of video material provided by textbook publishers in relation to audio recordings.

Table 5.

Answers to question 9 “Have you faced any problems in relation to acquiring materials?” reported by Finnish EFL teachers (n=19).

Answer option	n	%
Not enough time to prioritize designing/acquiring additional materials	13	68 %
Not enough material available that is suitable for teaching	6	32 %
Not enough variety in materials suitable for teaching	4	21 %
I feel that I do not have enough knowledge about the topic	3	16 %
Insecurity about the materials being suitable for practicing a certain feature	1	5 %
Other	1	5 %

5. DISCUSSION

The first research question aimed to find out what kind of materials are used to teach pronunciation. According to the results of the present study, textbooks are clearly the most commonly used materials for pronunciation teaching, and a few of the participants reported textbooks as the only materials they use. This is rather unsurprising, since previous research shows that language teaching in Finland greatly depends on textbooks, as pointed out by Tergujeff (2013). In addition to textbooks, teachers use a variety of materials. It seems that teachers use materials that have a focus on the rhythm of speech, intonation and word stress, such as videos, poems and music, as well as materials that focus on segmentals, such as exercises with phonetic symbols. Additional tools, such as mirrors, are used with other materials to demonstrate the position of the mouth.

According to Mäkinen (2021) read aloud, spelling and dictation, listen and repeat, phonetic training and ear training are the most common types of pronunciation exercises in Finnish EFL textbooks. The textbooks examined by Mäkinen (2021), for example, *Go For It!* (Sanoma Pro, 2024a) and *On the Go* (Sanoma Pro, 2024c), were also the most commonly used book series by the participants of the present study. According to the present study, the most commonly used additional materials seem to be of a similar kind to the exercises in the textbooks. The participants reported using YouTube-videos mostly for listening to differences in accents (ear training) or mimicking different kinds of accents (listen and repeat). On the other hand, creative techniques, such as drama techniques, games and rhyme and verse are among the least common kinds of exercises in textbooks (Mäkinen, 2021). These were also the least common kinds of additional materials, as plays, games and poems were chosen only by a few participants. This may support the claim that textbooks heavily guide the content of language teaching, as teachers seem reluctant to bring methods uncommon in the textbooks into the classroom. Adding variety in the materials would be beneficial for learners because it would help the learners stay motivated and find methods that meet their individual needs (Tergujeff, forthcoming).

An important finding regarding the second and third research questions, which aimed to find out why and how teachers acquire additional materials for pronunciation teaching, is that most of the participants try to find authentic materials. Textbooks are specifically designed for teaching purposes, and therefore the recordings are scripted and possibly sound less natural than spontaneous speech. Although students get to listen to authentic speech, the most commonly used materials by the participants of the present study rarely allow students to produce speech in authentic, less

restricted communicative situations. The one participant who reported using plays for pronunciation teaching answered that the purpose of the plays is to practice pronunciation in a conversational manner. Although no one specifically reported lack of different kinds of accents in textbooks as a reason for acquiring additional materials, it is possible that textbooks do not present a wide variety of accents, as most of the additional materials are specifically used to listen to differences in accents. As discussed previously, Finnish EFL teachers aim for intelligible communication in pronunciation teaching (Mäkinen, 2021). The present study also suggests that the intelligibility principle guides pronunciation teaching in Finland, as such a great emphasis is put on differences in accents, including non-native accents.

As pointed out by Tergujeff (forthcoming), pronunciation exercises EFL textbooks are often seen as insufficient. The results of the present study align with previous studies, as the participants seemed rather discontent with the pronunciation exercises in textbooks. Lack of pronunciation exercises as well as lack of variety in pronunciation exercises in textbooks were reported as reasons for acquiring additional materials. However, the response to materials in textbooks was not all negative. Some participants, especially primary school teachers, reported being satisfied with the pronunciation exercises in textbooks. The participants also reported struggling to find suitable materials for teaching while acquiring additional materials. Perhaps, teachers are unsure how to utilize different authentic materials or there is little material available specifically for pronunciation teaching purposes.

Possibly the most determining factor in regard to the third research question, which aimed to gain insight into the process of designing or acquiring additional materials for pronunciation teaching, is lack of time. Similar results have been found in previous research, which suggests that lack of time and having to prioritize other aspects of language over pronunciation are common problems related to pronunciation teaching (Mäkinen, 2021; Georgiou, 2019). A common theme in the results of the present study was that teachers go for materials that are easy to find or take little effort and time to design. Considering this, it is interesting to note that a textbook that is specifically designed for pronunciation teaching was used only by two of the participants. A pronunciation textbook would provide a lot of material, requiring minimal effort and time from the teacher. This may indicate that teachers are unaware of the possibilities for pronunciation teaching materials. As previous research suggests, pronunciation is not addressed sufficiently in teacher training in Finland (Tergujeff, 2012). The impact of textbooks is also evident in the process of acquiring materials. The

participants commonly reported designing materials based on the topics and exercises in textbooks as well as complementing the exercises in textbooks with additional materials.

As a result of the rise of the communicative approach to language teaching, pronunciation teaching became less popular (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 22). This has likely affected teacher training, as many teachers feel that they do not receive enough instruction on how to teach pronunciation (Tergujeff, 2012; Georgiou, 2019), and younger teachers may be more discontent with the training than older teachers (Tergujeff, 2012). The results of the present study somewhat support these studies. Three of the 27 participants chose the option “I feel that I do not have enough knowledge about the topic” as a problem they have faced while searching for or designing materials for pronunciation teaching. One participant also chose “Insecurity about the materials being suitable for practicing a certain feature”. This shows that some teachers do not feel confident teaching pronunciation based on the training they have received. However, as the questionnaire was sent to a Facebook group of EFL teachers in Finland, and was completely voluntary, those who are specifically interested in pronunciation may have been more inclined to answer the questionnaire. On the other hand, those who have little interest in pronunciation teaching may have been more likely to ignore the questionnaire (Denscombe, 2014, pp. 26-27). Due to this, the participants may have been more knowledgeable on pronunciation teaching than teachers on average, and therefore possibly less insecure. The fact that a relatively large amount of materials are neglected in pronunciation teaching can also indicate that pronunciation is not sufficiently addressed in teacher training. Teachers might simply be unaware of all the possibilities for different materials.

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to examine the materials used in pronunciation teaching in Finland. As previous research indicates that teachers feel that textbooks do not provide sufficient exercises for pronunciation teaching (Mäkinen, 2021; Ostovar Namaghi et.al., 2014), it was relevant to examine what other materials are used and why. The present study supports previous research, as many of the participants reported textbooks not having enough pronunciation exercises and variety in the exercises as well as feeling that the exercises are not good enough. Teachers seem to supplement the exercises in textbooks especially with materials that are more authentic, present a variety of accents and offer possibilities to focus on specific, challenging features. Previous research has found that teachers struggle to find the time to prioritize pronunciation teaching, which was also rather evident in the results of the present study.

As the questionnaire was completed by only 27 participants, the results cannot be generalized. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the results may be biased, as teachers who are interested in pronunciation teaching and put more effort into it are possibly more likely to have answered the questionnaire. Further research could expand on the content of the materials and teaching methods as they are addressed only on a surface level in the present study. Further research could also be done to find out how well teacher training addresses different materials for pronunciation teaching, as the present study shows that teachers do not utilize the whole variety of suitable materials for pronunciation teaching.

Despite the limitations, the present study managed to gather valuable information about a particularly problematic area in EFL teaching. The present study offers insight into the possibilities for pronunciation teaching and raises awareness to the fact that a lot of possible materials are neglected in pronunciation teaching. Another important result that the present study brings forward is that there should be more easily accessible materials for pronunciation teaching. The present study also provides valuable information for textbook publishers, as it is clear that teachers wish textbooks had more variety in pronunciation exercises. Based on the present study, teachers mostly utilize traditional audiolingual methods, such as listen and repeat, in pronunciation teaching. However, there is room for creativity and play in pronunciation teaching. Being more aware of the problems related to acquiring and using different materials for pronunciation teaching is a step towards making a problematic area in EFL teaching easier and more accessible.

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APPENDIX 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Ääntämisen opetuksessa käytettävät materiaalit englannin oppitunneilla

Tämä kysely on osa kandidaatintutkielmaa, jonka aiheena on englannin ääntämisen opetuksessa käytettävät materiaalit oppikirjojen lisäksi. Kysely on suunnattu alakoulun, yläkoulun ja lukion englannin opettajille. Kysymykset liittyvät materiaalien etsimiseen, suunnitteluun, valitsemiseen ja käyttöön sekä näissä ilmeneviin ongelmiin. Kyselyyn vastataan anonyymisti, ja vain tutkimuksen tekijä näkee vastaukset. Jos kysymykseen on annettu useita vastausvaihtoehtoja, voit valita niin monta kuin haluat.

Vastaamalla kyselyyn annat luvan täyttämiesi tietojen käyttämiseen tutkimuksessa. Kiitos osallistumisestasi!

Martta Kasurinen

1. Mitä luokka-asteita opetat?

- Alakoulu
- Yläkoulu
- Lukio

2. Mitä oppikirjasarjaa käytät?

- Go for it!
- High five!
- On the Go
- Scene
- On Track
- Insights

Jokin muu?

3. Mitä materiaaleja käytät ääntämisen opetuksessa?

- Oppikirja
- Musiikki
- TV-ohjelmat
- Näytelmät
- Runot
- Tarinat
- Pelit
- Youtube-videot
- Opetuskäyttöön tarkoitetut nettisivut
- Muut nettisivut
- Itse tehdyt materiaalit
- Ääntämisen oppikirja
- Käytöstä poistettujen oppikirjojen materiaalit
- Täydennyskoulutuksesta saadut materiaalit

Jotain muuta?

Jos valitsit kohdan "itse tehdyt materiaalit", vastaa myös kahteen seuraavaan kysymykseen. Muussa tapauksessa voit siirtyä kysymykseen 6.

4. Millaisia materiaaleja suunnittelet itse ääntämisen opetukseen?

5. Miten suunnittelet itse materiaaleja ääntämisen opetukseen?

6. Miten hyödynnät kysymyksessä 3 valitsemiasi materiaaleja opetuksessa? Kuvaile lyhyesti (esim. TV-ohjelmista kuunnellaan tiettyjen aksenttien erityispiirteitä).

7. Miksi valitset materiaaleja oppikirjan lisäksi?

- Oppikirjassa ei ole tarpeeksi ääntämiseen keskittyviä tehtäviä
- Oppikirjassa ei mielestäni ole tarpeeksi hyviä tehtäviä
- Oppikirjassa ei ole tarpeeksi laajasti erilaisia ääntämiseen liittyviä tehtäviä
- Haluan keskittyä johonkin tiettyyn piirteeseen tarkemmin
- Haluan tuoda vaihtelua oppitunneille

jokin muu syy?

8. Mikä vaikuttaa materiaalien valintaan?

- Aksentti
- Muut ymmärrettävyyteen liittyvät tekijät (esim. sanasto, puhenopeus)
- Materiaalissa käsiteltävä aihe (ei siis ääntämiseen liittyvä aihealue)
- Oppilaiden mielenkiinnon kohteet
- Autenttisuus

Jokin muu?

9. Oletko kokenut joitakin ongelmia materiaalien hankkimiseen liittyen?

- Ei tarpeeksi opetukseen sopivaa materiaalia
- Ei tarpeeksi vaihtelua opetukseen sopivissa materiaaleissa
- Kokemus, että oma tuntemus aiheesta ei ole tarpeeksi
- Epävarmuus materiaalien sopimisesta juuri tietyn aiheen harjoitteluun
- Ei ole tarpeeksi aikaa priorisoida ylimääräisten materiaalien suunniteluun/hankkimiseen

Jotain muuta?