

An Assessment of Pronunciation Teaching Content of the Sunrise12 Method from Teachers' and Students' Perspectives in the Context of Kurdistan Region

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Abstract

This study evaluates the effectiveness and suitability of the pronunciation teaching content in *Sunrise 12*, the prescribed English language textbook for 12th-grade secondary schools in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. A mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating Likert-scale surveys with 27 teachers and 111 students from 25 schools in Erbil city, alongside a systematic document analysis of the textbook's pronunciation components. The findings reveal a significant disconnect: while both teachers and students highly value pronunciation for effective communication, they perceive the content in *Sunrise 12* as inadequate. The textbook analysis substantiates these perceptions, identifying infrequent coverage, a heavy bias towards segmental features (individual sounds) over crucial suprasegmental features (rhythm, stress), and a reliance on non-communicative drills. Although the inclusion of phonetic transcription is a noted strength, the overall inadequacy compels teachers to supplement the curriculum extensively. This study provides insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and stakeholders, highlighting the need for revised materials and instructional practices to better support learners' pronunciation skills. It contributes to the broader discussion on the role of textbooks in effective pronunciation instruction within foreign language learning contexts.

Keywords: Pronunciation Teaching Content, Sunrise12, Curriculum, Pronunciation Components

Introduction

Kurdish and English exhibit distinct phonological systems, posing significant challenges for Kurdish speakers learning English. A comparative analysis reveals that English has a set of approximately 44 phonemes; the number of phonemes in English can vary depending on the

variety, but it is generally agreed that British English (BrE) comprises around 22-24 consonants, 2 semivowels, and 20 vowels, whereas American English (AmE) typically has 15-19 vowels (Bizzocchi, 2017). The number of phonemes in Kurdish is also a matter of debate among linguists, with estimates ranging from 34 (Hamid, 2016) to 40 (Wahby, 1929). Other researchers have proposed varying numbers of phonemes in Kurdish, including MacKenzie (1961), McCarus (1958), Wais (1984), Ahmad (1986), Fattah (1997), Mahwi (2009), and Gharib (2018). Unlike English, Kurdish has a phonetic writing system, where words are written as they are pronounced (Rahimpour & Dovaise, 2011). The two languages differ significantly in terms of consonants, vowels, stress patterns, and intonation. Specifically, English sounds and syllable structures that do not exist in Kurdish can cause problems for Kurdish learners of English (Mohammadi, 2014). These phonological differences can lead to difficulties in pronunciation, making it essential to consider these differences when teaching English to Kurdish speakers.

The differences in phonology between Kurdish and English may negatively affect the intelligibility of Kurdish-accented English. These differences can impact the intelligibility of accented English, but the relationship is multifaceted. While standard English is often more intelligible to second language learners than regional or foreign-accented varieties (Eisenstein & Berkowitz, 1981), familiarity and exposure to specific accents can play a significant role in determining intelligibility, as seen in Korean learners' ability to understand British English more quickly than other varieties like General American, Australian, and even Korean-accented English despite limited exposure (Chung & Bong, 2019). Notably, attitudes towards accents do not necessarily align with intelligibility levels (Chung & Bong, 2019). For Kurdish learners, phonological disparities between their native language and English, including differences in consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation, may pose challenges (Rahimpour & Dovaise, 2011). Meanwhile, Kurdish EFL teachers often prioritize native-like pronunciation, especially those with study abroad experience, suggesting a preference for native pronunciation over mere intelligibility (Othman & Zahawi, 2020).

The international adequacy of English pronunciation in Iraq is at position 144 in the total survey of 169 countries worldwide (Educational Testing Service, 2017; Perwitasari, 2018). Iraqi learners of English tend to prefer the British accent (RP) over the American accent (GA) (Rashid, 2011). However, they struggle to identify English word stress patterns, especially in words with three syllables or complex syllable structures, due to differences between Arabic and English phonology (Al-Thalab et al., 2018). Although Iraqi learners' English is generally understandable, mispronouncing certain sounds can cause communication breakdowns, which they

Background of the Study

Pronunciation plays a vital role in English language learning, directly affecting learners' ability to communicate effectively (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). However, it often receives inadequate attention in ESL/EFL classrooms, despite its significance (Gilakjani, 2011). Unclear pronunciation can lead to communication breakdowns, erode learners' confidence, and restrict social interactions (Gilakjani, 2012). Factors such as age of acquisition, language exposure, and motivation influence pronunciation learning (Gilakjani, 2012). To enhance pronunciation instruction, teachers should integrate it with other language skills like grammar and vocabulary (Jones, 2017). Effective teaching strategies include using authentic materials,

exemplifying both segmental and suprasegmental features, and providing extensive practice opportunities (Gilakjani, 2011). By incorporating pronunciation into the curriculum and employing suitable teaching techniques, educators can significantly improve learners' overall communication skills (Gilakjani, 2012), ultimately helping ESL/EFL students achieve their academic, professional, and social goals more effectively (Jones, 2017).

Textbooks significantly impact English pronunciation instruction, shaping teaching methods and task types (Tergujeff, 2015). However, their effectiveness can be inconsistent. An earlier study on *Sunrise 12*, a widely used EFL textbook in Kurdistan, found that it emphasizes linguistic and creative tasks, but lacks sufficient affective, interpersonal, and cognitive tasks (Ebadi, 2016). Although textbooks provide pronunciation exercises, they often lack clear guidance, placing the onus on teachers to facilitate effective learning (Handayani & Hikmawati, 2018). In community-based ESL settings, teachers acknowledge the importance of pronunciation instruction but frequently lack the necessary training to implement it effectively. Students recognize the value of pronunciation learning, but textbooks often marginalize pronunciation activities, which teachers may subsequently omit (Millard et al., 2020). These findings underscore the need for improved textbook design and teacher training to enhance pronunciation instruction and cater to learners' needs in diverse educational contexts.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of pronunciation for effective communication is well-established, yet many English language textbooks fall short in providing adequate pronunciation instruction. Studies have consistently shown that pronunciation teaching in English language textbooks is often inadequate, with significant gaps in instruction and practice (Tergujeff, 2015; Millard et al., 2020; Topal, 2022; Rubio, 2024). The content of textbooks plays a crucial role in determining what is taught in the classroom. To address these issues, there is a need for improved textbook design, teacher training, and more communicative pronunciation activities that support learners' language development.

Research Objectives

The objective of the present study is to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of the pronunciation contents in the prescribed curriculum (i.e., *Sunrise 12*). Moreover, we aim to evaluate its alignment with the learners' needs.

Research Question

The research question we purport to answer in the present study is: To what extent are the pronunciation content and components in the prescribed curriculum (i.e., *Sunrise 12*) adequate for teaching the pronunciation of English as a foreign language to students in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, whose native language is standard Kurdish?

Significance of the Study

This study on the assessment of pronunciation teaching content in *Sunrise 12* has significant implications for various stakeholders in the field of English language teaching. The findings of this research may provide valuable insights for:

- *Teachers*: By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the pronunciation content in *Sunrise 12*, teachers will be able to tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of their students, ultimately enhancing their pronunciation skills.
- *Curriculum Designers*: The study's results will inform curriculum designers about the effectiveness of the pronunciation content in *Sunrise 12*, enabling them to make informed decisions about future revisions and improvements.
- *Learners*: The study's findings will ultimately benefit learners by providing them with more effective pronunciation instruction, which is essential for adequate communication in English.

By shedding light on the pronunciation teaching content in *Sunrise 12*, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve English language teaching and learning.

Literature Review

Key Theories of Pronunciation Teaching

The field of pronunciation teaching is underpinned by several key theories that highlight the significance of integrating pronunciation into language instruction to foster communicative competence (Hismanoglu, 2006). Various approaches have gained recognition in pronunciation pedagogy, including Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, and autonomous learning, which cater to diverse learner needs and preferences (Hismanoglu, 2006). Evaluation criteria for pronunciation vary, with both human raters and specialized software being employed to assess learners' pronunciation skills (e.g., Vančová, 2022). Additionally, factors such as the speaker's language background and familiarity with the topic can influence pronunciation performance (Vančová, 2022). These findings offer valuable insights for designing effective pronunciation materials and instruction methods in English language teaching, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and nuanced approach.

The study of phonetics and phonology plays a vital role in pronunciation teaching, with strategies such as contrastive analysis and minimal pair exercises being employed to address the challenges posed by learners' first language (L1) interference (Vásquez, 2025). Furthermore, technology has revolutionized pronunciation teaching and research, offering a range of tools that provide automatic feedback, diagnose errors, and measure progress (Levis, 2007). The increasing importance of Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Teaching (CAPT) has led to the development of theories and practices that are grounded in acoustic reality, enabling more effective and accurate pronunciation instruction (Levis, 2007). Additionally, the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet and speech recognition software can provide learners with valuable support and feedback, enhancing their pronunciation skills (Vásquez, 2025). Ultimately, effective pronunciation teaching requires a multifaceted approach that combines linguistic theory, practical techniques, and technological tools to cater to the diverse needs of learners (Brinton, 1993).

Criteria for Effective Pronunciation Materials

The development of effective pronunciation materials is crucial in English language teaching; as recent studies emphasize. To create impactful materials, it is essential to consider several key factors, including a focus on both segmental and suprasegmental features (Yağız et al., 2024), explicit phonetic instruction, and the integration of technology (Baldișsera & Tumolo, 2021; Gordon et al., 2012). Effective pronunciation materials should also aim to raise learners'

awareness, provide ear training opportunities, and incorporate engaging activities such as rhyme and verse (Babadjanova, 2022). Research has shown that explicit instruction, particularly on suprasegmental aspects like stress, rhythm, and intonation, can significantly enhance learners' comprehensibility (Gordon et al., 2012). The use of mobile apps can provide learners with varied input and immediate feedback, although these apps often prioritize segmental features (Baldissera & Tumolo, 2021). The renewed focus on pronunciation teaching has led to the creation of new classroom materials and textbooks, reflecting a growing recognition of its importance. However, despite this progress, there is still a need for more communication-based pronunciation materials that prioritize real-life communication and authentic language use (Celce-Murcia, 1996; Levis, 2005; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2012; Levis, 2018).

Previous Studies on Textbook Analysis

Research on textbook analysis for pronunciation instruction has yielded several significant findings. Studies have shown that textbooks often provide limited opportunities for pronunciation practice, typically relegating it to review sections or integrating it into listening and speaking activities (Millard et al., 2020; Gao, 2024). Although some textbooks cover fundamental aspects of the English sound system, the effectiveness of their presentation can vary significantly (Sugimoto & Uchida, 2015). Analyses of textbooks in various contexts, such as Korea and China, highlight the need for more comprehensive and interactive approaches to pronunciation instruction, including expanded teaching items, clearer instructions, and more engaging exercises (Gao, 2024; SungHai, 2024). Phonics has been recognized as a valuable approach to pronunciation instruction, although its implementation can differ across textbooks (Sugimoto & Uchida, 2015; Gao, 2024). Furthermore, teachers often lack adequate training in pronunciation instruction, underscoring the need for professional development to enable them to effectively utilize and supplement textbook materials (Millard et al., 2020). These findings emphasize the importance of improving both textbook design and teacher preparation to ensure effective pronunciation instruction.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of pronunciation teaching content in *Sunrise 12*, a widely used English language textbook. The mixed-methods approach combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Data Collection

Survey Research: A Likert-scale survey was administered to 27 teachers and 111 students from 25 schools out of 59 in Erbil city to gather data on their perceptions of the pronunciation content in *Sunrise 12*. The survey aimed to investigate the extent to which the pronunciation content is deemed adequate for teaching and learning pronunciation. The questionnaire is virtually the same for both teachers and students, with 21 items for students and 22 items for teachers. There is only one more item for the teachers which is No. 3 "*The Teachers' book in sunrise 12 is good for teachers' guidance.*"

Tables 1 and 2 list the demographic questions (section I) and the questions asked to probe the participants' views on the difficulty and suitability of elements of the *Sunrise-12* materials. In order to save space the tables also summarize the responses received, either in qualitative terms (section I) or in quantitative terms (means and standard deviation of scores on scales from 1 to 4). Table 1 does this for the teacher questionnaire, while Table 2 presents the same information for the student version (with item II.3 greyed out, since the Teacher's Book is not available for students)

Table 1.

Teachers' questionnaire. M = mean rating, SD = Standard deviation of rating.

I. Demographic questions							
Factors	Conditions						
Teachers	27 participants						
Age	34 – 59 years old						
Gender	Males 14, Females 13						
Degree	BA 25, MA 1, and PhD 1						
Nationality	Kurdish						
Mother tongue	Central Kurdish						
Experience in teaching English	11 – 34 years						
Course/module in EFLT	Yes 16, No 11						
Courses in English pronunciation instruction	Yes 2, No 25						
Knowing other languages	Arabic & English (mainly)						
Level(s) currently teaching	12 th grade						
II.	Materials of learning pronunciation						
A.	How do you agree with the following statements? (1= I do not agree at all; 4= I agree completely)	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1.	The teaching material on pronunciation in Sunrise12 student's book is sufficient.	7	12	5	3	2.15	.95
2.	There are enough exercises and drills in Sunrise Activity book.	4	14	6	3	2.30	.87
3.	The Teachers' book in Sunrise 12 is good for teachers' guidance.	1	15	8	3	2.48	.75
4.	The pronunciation teaching material is designed to be taught within the specified lesson time.	2	16	7	2	2.33	.73
5.	I use other pamphlets of pronunciation material to teach with Sunrise 12 Student's book.	3	6	12	6	2.78	.93
B.	How difficult do you think are the following for students of English to learn? (1= not difficult; 4= very difficult)	1	2	3	4	M	SD
6.	Grammar/syntax	7	1	7	2	2.15	.91
7.	Vocabulary	8	0	6	3	2.15	.99
8.	Pronunciation	3	9	2	3	2.56	.85
C.	How important do you feel are the following elements in learning to speak in English? (1= not important; 4= very important)	1	2	3	4	M	SD
9.	Grammar/syntax	0	4	18	5	3.04	.59
10.	Vocabulary	0	1	6	0	3.70	.54
11.	Pronunciation	0	0	0	7	3.63	.49
	How important do you think the following elements are for learning to understand spoken English?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
12.	Grammar/syntax	0	2	5	0	3.30	.61

13.	Vocabulary	0	0	7	0	3.74	.45
14.	Pronunciation	0	1	0	6	3.56	.58
	When speaking English, how important are the following for your English to look good and authentic (native-like) in terms of ...?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
15.	... Consonants	1	3	7	6	3.04	.71
16.	... Vowels	0	2	6	9	3.26	.59
17.	... Stress	4	9	0	4	2.52	.94
18.	... Intonation	3	5	1	8	2.89	.97
	When trying to make yourself understood in spoken English, how important do you think is it to use correct (native-like) forms in terms of ...?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
19.	... Consonants	0	2	9	6	3.15	.53
20.	... Vowels	0	2	3	2	3.37	.63
21.	... Stress	2	8	2	5	2.74	.86
22.	... Intonation	3	6	4	14	3.07	.11

Table 2

Students' questionnaire. M = mean rating, SD = Standard deviation of rating.

I. Demographic questions							
Factors		Conditions					
Students		111 participants					
Age		17 – 21 years old					
Gender		Males 55, Females 56					
Grade		12 th					
Nationality		Kurdish					
Mother tongue		Central Kurdish 109, Turkmen 2					
Duration of studying English		12 – 13 years					
Knowing other languages		Arabic & English (mainly)					
Factors		Conditions					
II.	Materials of learning pronunciation						
A.	How do you agree with the following statements? (1= I do not agree at all; 4= I agree completely)	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1.	The teaching material on pronunciation in Sunrise12 student’s book is sufficient.	7	38	41	25	2.76	.88
2.	There are enough exercises and drills in Sunrise Activity book.	12	33	42	24	2.70	.93
3.	The Teachers’ book in Sunrise 12 is good for teachers’ guidance.						
4.	The pronunciation teaching material is designed to be taught within the specified lesson time.	12	34	43	22	2.68	.92
5.	I use other pamphlets of pronunciation material to teach with Sunrise 12 Student’s book.	12	20	41	38	2.95	.98
B.	How difficult do you think are the following for students of English to learn? (1= not difficult; 4= very difficult)	1	2	3	4	M	SD
6.	Grammar/syntax	33	45	23	10	2.09	.93
7.	Vocabulary	51	46	11	3	1.69	.76
8.	Pronunciation	32	51	18	10	2.05	.90
C.	How important do you feel are the following elements in learning to speak in English?	1	2	3	4	M	SD

	(1= not important; 4= very important)						
9.	Grammar/syntax	14	18	28	51	3.05	1.07
10.	Vocabulary	4	15	45	47	3.22	.81
11.	Pronunciation	3	5	42	61	3.45	.71
	How important do you think the following elements are for learning to understand spoken English?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
12.	Grammar/syntax	0	2	5	0	3.30	.61
13.	Vocabulary	0	0	7	0	3.74	.45
14.	Pronunciation	0	1	0	6	3.56	.58
	When speaking English, how important are the following for your English to look good and authentic (native-like) in terms of ...?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
15.	... Consonants	5	7	6	3	3.05	.80
16.	... Vowels	1	5	6	9	3.29	.73
17.	... Stress	8	2	2	9	2.92	.86
18.	... Intonation	4	7	0	0	2.95	.81
	When trying to make yourself understood in spoken English, how important do you think is it to use correct (native-like) forms in terms of ...?	1	2	3	4	M	SD
19.	... Consonants	8	2	1	0	2.93	.87
20.	... Vowels	3	7	6	5	3.20	.80
21.	... Stress	8	2	4	7	2.72	.81
22.	... Intonation	3	27	3	8	2.95	.78

Document Analysis: A document analysis of the textbook's pronunciation components was conducted to examine the content, structure, and presentation of pronunciation materials in *Sunrise 12*. A detailed analysis of the textbook's pronunciation content was conducted, focusing on the following aspects:

- **Segmental Features:** Vowels and consonants, including their presentation, practice, and reinforcement in the textbook.
- **Suprasegmental Features:** Stress, rhythm, and intonation, including their presentation, practice, and reinforcement in the textbook. Suprasegmental features are also referred to as *prosodic features* or just *prosody* (for a detailed explanation of the terminological distinctions, see Van Heuven (2022)).
- **Activities:** The types and variety of activities used to practice pronunciation, including:
 - Drills: *Repetitive* speech production exercises that focus on specific sounds or sound patterns.
 - Minimal Pairs: Perceptual discrimination of pairs of words that differ by only one phoneme, used to practice distinguishing between minimally different sounds.
 - Communicative Tasks: Activities that require learners to use pronunciation in context to communicate effectively.

This analysis aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the pronunciation content in *Sunrise 12* and to inform the development of recommendations for improvement. By analyzing the textbook's pronunciation content in this way, we can gain a deeper understanding of its effectiveness and suitability for teaching pronunciation to learners.

Evaluation Framework

To assess the effectiveness and suitability of the pronunciation teaching content in *Sunrise 12*, the following evaluation criteria were employed:

- *Relevance*: The extent to which the pronunciation content aligns with learners' needs and priorities.
- *Clarity*: The clarity of presentation and explanation of pronunciation content.
- *Variety*: The range and diversity of activities, exercises, and materials in the pronunciation content.
- *Effectiveness*: The extent to which the pronunciation content achieves its intended objectives and improves learners' pronunciation skills.

These criteria were used to evaluate the pronunciation content in *Sunrise 12* from the perspectives of teachers and students, and to identify areas of strength and weakness.

Results and Discussion

In this section we will first summarize the main findings of part I of the teacher and student version of the questionnaire. Details can be found in the corresponding sections in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. The main part of this section, however, will be devoted to a detailed analysis of the quantitative part (II) of the questionnaire. In a preliminary analysis we will first establish that both teachers and students groups were internally in excellent agreement on their responses. Then we will use inferential statistics to determine which item means do and do not differ significantly from each other. Finally, we will consider the question whether teachers and students do or do not entertain the same ideas and expectations regarding the difficulty and desirability of aspects of EFL and the suitability of *Sunrise 12* to help the students reach their goals and expectations.

Summary of Section I of questionnaire (Demographic questions)

The 27 teachers are highly experienced (11-34 years) and predominantly hold BA degrees. A critical point is that 92.6% (25 out of 27) have had no formal courses in English pronunciation instruction, which likely influences their reliance on and evaluation of the textbook materials. The 111 students are a homogeneous group of 12th graders with a long history (12-13 years) of studying English, providing a well-established basis for their perceptions.

*Analysis of Section II of questionnaire (quantitative questions)**Agreement analysis within Teacher and Student groups*

As a preliminary in the statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses, we established the extent to which the participants agree in their responses. We did this separately for the smaller group of 27 EFL teachers, and for the larger group of 111 adolescent EFL learners. It would make no sense to compute alpha across both groups, since the students were not asked to respond to Question B3, which asked about the perceived adequacy of the teachers' book.

Statistical analyses reported in this article were done with IBM SPSS software, Version 27. We used Cronbach's alpha as the measure of agreement among the raters in each group. The agreement turns out to be excellent in either group, with $\alpha = .934$ ($N = 27$) for the teachers, and $.974$ ($N = 111$) for the students. For the interpretation of Cronbach's alpha see Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

These statistics show that both the teacher group and the student group responded to the questionnaire items in a highly homogeneous manner. This, in turn, will permit us later to propose recommendations that should work for the entire population of EFL teachers and for EFL learners who currently use the *Sunrise-12* curriculum.

Analysis of Likert Scale Items (Section II)

Part A: Sufficiency of *Sunrise-12* Materials (Items 1-5)

The first five questionnaire items (part IIA) ask students and teachers to rate the perceived adequacy of the *Sunrise 12* curriculum on scales from 1 (poor) to 4 (good). Here we interpret the ratings in a straightforward fashion. Given a scale midpoint of 2.5, any mean response below the midpoint will be considered as expressing dissatisfaction on the part of the user, while a mean response equal or greater than the midpoint can be treated as satisfactory. If one or more components of the *Sunrise-12* method are felt to be unsatisfactory, the teacher and or student may state they fruitfully use additional materials to compensate for the lacunae in the regular curriculum. Here we expect a negative correlation between the responses to items A1..A4 on the one hand and A5 on the other.

Table 3 contains the full correlation matrices for part A of the questionnaire, separately for the teachers and for the students (who did not have to answer Question A3).

Table 3

Full correlation matrix for questionnaire items A1 to A5, separately for Teacher and student responses. The top number in each cell is the Pearson correlation coefficient, the bottom number the associated p-value (2-tailed). Significant correlations ($p < .05$) in bold face.

	Teachers (N = 27)					Students (N = 111)				
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
A1		.551 .003	.381 .050	.589 .001	-.222 .266		.479 <.001		.343 <.001	-.068 .476
A2	.551 .003		.538 .004	.563 .002	-.248 .213	.479 <.001			.451 <.001	-.038 .694
A3	.381 .050	.538 .004		.394 .042	.103 .608					
A4	.589 .001	.563 .002	.394 .042		-.056 .781	.343 <.000	.451 <.001			.122 .202
A5	-.222 .266	-.248 .213	.103 .608	-.056 .781		-.068 .476	-.038 .694		.122 .202	

Table 3 shows that the responses to the first four questions correlate positively with r-values 0.381 and 0.589, which correlations may reach significance but are moderate at best. Correlations with Question A5 are generally negative, as predicted, but never significant – so that the conclusion follows that the use of supplementary materials is independent of the perceived (in)adequacy of the *Sunrise-12* method.

The other questions in the questionnaire ask the participants to compare the perceived difficulty or importance of linguistic domains. Here it makes sense to ask ourselves whether some domains (Grammar/Syntax, Vocabulary, Pronunciation) are felt to be more or less difficult or important as a learning goals than the others – so that teaching priorities may be derived from the responses. For this part of the analysis, we continue to assume that the

responses can be interpreted as interval data and generally satisfy the requirements for parametric testing. Differences in mean ratings for each of the component questions asked in rubrics B and C will be compared, separately for the teacher and student parts of the responses, by performing within-participant one-way analyses of variance, in which the three or four linguistic domains targeted are the factor levels. The significance of the main effect was determined after applying Greenhouse-Geisser's correction of the degrees of freedom to counteract possible sphericity. As a result of this correction, the nominal degrees of freedom associated with the factor and error term are multiplied by a fraction, thereby raising the p-value; although we applied this correction in all tests, we will state the nominal degrees of freedom. Partial eta squared (η^2) will be used as the measure of effect size. When the factor was significant, a post-hoc test was carried out to identify which factor levels do and do not differ from each other. Bonferroni correction of p-values ($p < .05$) was applied to compensate for multiple testing.

Table 4 summarizes the results of the ANOVAs and associated post-hoc tests. There are five questionnaire rubrics, i.e., judging the difficulty (B) and judging the importance C of linguistic domains or phonological aspects for speaking and understanding English, sounding nativelike and being intelligible. The rubrics are listed in the same order as in the teachers' and students' questionnaire.

Table 4

Summary of Oneway ANOVAs performed on questionnaire results. G = Grammar/syntax, V = Vocabulary, P = Pronunciation, T = Tonic stress, P = (other) Prosody, V = Vowels, C = Consonants. Significant effects in bold face. In the specification of the post-hoc analysis aspects/domains are listed in ascending order of their mean rating (for actual means see the questionnaires) in curly brackets do not differ significantly from each other. Post-hoc tests were Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons ($p < .05$).

	Teachers					Students				
	ϕ_1, ϕ_2	F	p	η^2	Post-hoc	ϕ_1, ϕ_2	F	p	η^2	Post-hoc
B. Difficulty	2, 52	2.4	.113	.083	{GVP}	2, 220	9.2	<.001	.077	V<{PG}
C. Importance										
Speaking	2, 52	5.8	.008	.184	{GP}<V	2, 220	6.7	.002	.058	{GV}<{VP}
Understanding	2, 52	15.5	<.001	.373	G<{PV}	2, 220	8.7	.001	.073	{GV}<P
Nativeness	3, 78	6.4	.005	.196	T<{PVC} {TPV}<C	3, 330	7.1	<.001	.061	{TPV}<C
Intelligibility	3, 78	4.1	.028	.137	T<{PVC} {TPV}C	3, 330	10.1	<.001	.084	{TVP}<C {TV}{PC} T{VP}C

Summary of Teachers' Perceptions

Part A: Sufficiency of Sunrise 12 Materials (Items 1-5)

- i. *Key Finding: General Dissatisfaction.* The means for part A, items 1-5 are all below the scale midpoint of 2.5, indicating that teachers generally agree that the materials are insufficient.

Item 1 (Sufficiency in Student's Book): $M = 2.15$. This is the lowest score, showing strong agreement that the pronunciation content in the core textbook is not sufficient.

Item 5 (Use of Other Materials): $M = 2.78$. This is the highest mean in this section, confirming that teachers actively seek out additional pamphlets and resources to compensate for the shortcomings of the *Sunrise 12* book. The distribution (12 out of 27 sometimes/often use other materials) reinforces this compensatory behavior.

Part B: Perceived Difficulty (Items 6-8)

i. *Key Finding: Pronunciation is Seen as the Most Difficult.*

Difficulty (Items 6-8): Pronunciation ($M = 2.56$) is rated as more difficult for students to learn than both *Grammar* and *Vocabulary* (both $M = 2.15$).

Part C: Perceived Importance (Items 9-22)

i. *Key Finding: High Value on Pronunciation.*

Importance for Speaking (Items 9-11): Similarly, Pronunciation ($M = 3.63$) is considered crucial, again *second* only to Vocabulary ($M = 3.70$).

Importance for Understanding (Items 12-14): Pronunciation ($M = 3.56$) is rated as very important, just *behind* Vocabulary ($M = 3.74$) and ahead of Grammar ($M = 3.30$).

ii. *Key Finding: Segmental Features Valued over Suprasegmental.*

When evaluating specific features for “native-like” speech (Items 15-18) and comprehensibility (Items 19-22), Vowels and Consonants consistently receive higher importance ratings than Stress and Intonation. This suggests teachers prioritize individual sounds over rhythm and melody, possibly reflecting their own training or the textbook’s focus.

Summary of Students’ Perceptions

Part A: Sufficiency of Sunrise 12 Materials (Items 1-5)

i. *Key Finding: Mild Dissatisfaction to Neutrality.* The means hover around the midpoint (2.5-3.0), indicating a more neutral stance than teachers, but still leaning towards insufficiency.

- Item 1 (Sufficiency in Student’s Book): $M = 2.76$. Students are slightly more positive than teachers ($M=2.15$), but the mean still suggests the content is only “somewhat” sufficient.
- Item 5 (Use of Other Materials): $M = 2.95$. A significant number of students (79 out of 111) also use extra pronunciation materials, mirroring the behavior of their teachers.

Part B: Perceived Difficulty (Items 6-8)

i. *Key Finding: Pronunciation is Not Seen as Overly Difficult.*

- Difficulty (Item 7): Interestingly, students find Vocabulary the easiest ($M = 1.69$) and see Pronunciation ($M = 2.05$) and Grammar ($M = 2.09$) as similarly moderately difficult. This contrasts sharply with teachers, who found pronunciation the most difficult.

Part C: Perceived Importance (Items 9-22)

i. *Key Finding: Very High Value on Pronunciation.*

- Importance for Understanding (Item 9-11): Pronunciation ($M=3.50$) is rated as the most important factor, higher than both Vocabulary ($M = 3.37$) and Grammar ($M = 3.15$).
- Importance for Speaking (Item 12-14): Pronunciation ($M = 3.45$) remains highly important, slightly behind Vocabulary ($M = 3.22$).

ii. *Key Finding: Agreement on Segmental over Suprasegmental.* (Items 15-22)

- Like their teachers, students assign higher importance to Vowels and Consonants than to Stress and Intonation for both sounding authentic and being understood.

Alignment between Teacher and Student Perceptions

In order to determine the degree of alignment (or its complement, i.e., divergence or mismatch) in the teacher and student perceptions of difficulty and desirability of EFL learning objectives, we plot, in Figure 1, the mean scores given by the students (vertically) as a function of the scores on the same scales given by the teachers (item 3 excluded, see Tables 1 and 2 for numerical data).

This graph of the mean student ratings plotted as a function of the teachers' rating reveals a strong correlation. In the graph, r^2 is mentioned. The raw correlation is the square root of r^2 , i.e., $r = 0.843$ ($p < .001$). However, three items, i.e., 6-7-8, seem to corrupt the correlation. These are the items that ask about the perceived difficulty of grammar/syntax (#6), vocabulary (#7) and pronunciation (#8) – as noted before. If these three items are omitted from the teacher-student comparison, the correlation gets better still: $r = .886$ ($p < .001$).

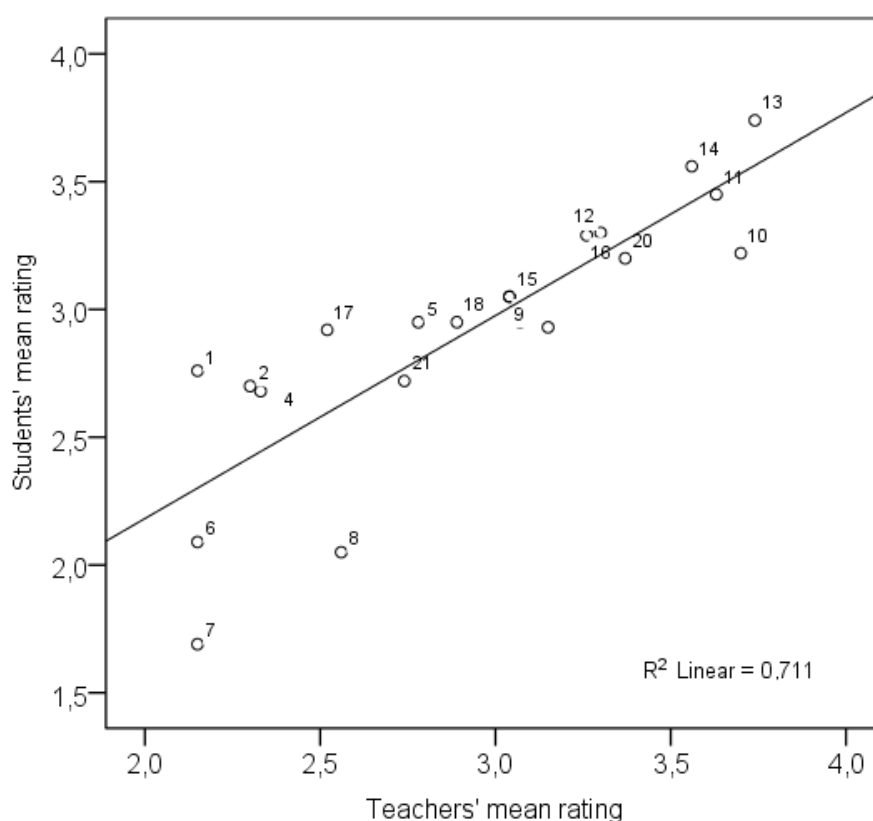


Figure 1. Scatterplot of students' and teachers' responses to the 21 shared questionnaire items.

These observations bear out that, overall, the teachers and the students in the present survey are in high agreement in their ideas of relative difficulty and desirability of EFL learning objectives and the extent to which Sunrise 12 may assist them in achieving their goals.

We conclude this section by summarizing the main points of (dis)agreement between the teacher and student perceptions.

In the teachers' part of the questionnaire the perceived difficulty of the three linguistic domains (Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation) was the same. For the students, however,

the effect was significant (see Table 4, see Figure 1). The students consider Vocabulary an easier domain than either Grammar or Pronunciation, which latter two do not differ from each another in the post-hoc comparison.

In terms of their perceived importance for speaking EFL, the effect of the three domains is significant for the teachers. Here, Vocabulary is considered more important than Grammar but does not differ from Pronunciation, which in turn does not differ from Grammar. The effect is also significant in the student group. The post-hoc analysis identifies Pronunciation as more important for speaking than Grammar, but not vocabulary, which latter two do not differ from each other.

When it comes to their importance for understanding attached by teachers, the three domains differ rather strongly. Here, Grammar is judged to be less important than either Vocabulary or Pronunciation, which do not differ from each other. The effect is smaller in the student questionnaire. For the students, Pronunciation is more important for understanding English than either Vocabulary or Grammar, which, however, do not differ significantly from each other.

In order to sound (near)native in EFL, teachers give the correct pronunciation of the consonants the highest priority, while getting the tonic (sentence) stresses right is rated least important. For the student respondents, getting the consonants right was considered more important than the other phonological features, which do not differ from one another in terms of their desirability.

When intelligibility (rather than nativeness) is the preferred goal, teachers place the four phonological aspects in the same order as before, i.e., TPVC, where only the extremes T and C differ from each other. The same order is found in the student responses, who also consider Tonic stresses significantly less important than getting the Consonants right.

Key Conclusions and Implications

- i. *Major Curriculum Gap:* There is a clear and consistent disconnect between the value placed on pronunciation (by both teachers and students) and the perceived inadequacy of the prescribed textbook, Sunrise 12, in addressing this need.
- ii. *Teachers are Under-Resourced and Under-Trained:* Teachers, lacking formal training in pronunciation pedagogy (only 2 out of 27 had a relevant course), are forced to supplement with external materials. This indicates a need for both better core materials and professional development.
- iii. *Differing Perceptions of Difficulty:* The gap between teachers (who see pronunciation as most difficult) and students (who do not) is intriguing. It may reflect teachers' greater awareness of the complexities of the phonological system, or it could indicate that the teaching methods are not effectively addressing students' actual challenges.

A confidence gap: Students are confident due to limited experience, while teachers are cautious due to experience with communication failure.

- iv. *Focus on Segmental Phonetics:* The consensus that individual sounds (vowels and consonants) are more important than stress and intonation may reflect a traditional

teaching focus. However, for overall comprehensibility and fluency, suprasegmental features are critically important, suggesting a potential area for pedagogical shift.

- v. *High Data Reliability*: The high Cronbach's alpha scores give strong credibility to the questionnaire results. The trends observed are not due to random responses but reflect genuine and consistent attitudes within the groups.

Analysis of Pronunciation Content in *Sunrise-12* Method

Summary of Resources

Sunrise 12 is specifically written to meet the needs of students in their final year of secondary education in Kurdistan. The *Sunrise-12* curriculum is structured into eight units, each comprising three sections: *Language*, *Skills and Sounds*, and *Vocabulary*. The pronunciation content is woven into the *Skills and Sounds* section. To reinforce learning, every three teaching units are followed by a review unit that provides a recap of the *language* and *vocabulary* concepts covered in the preceding units. For example, unit 4 serves as a review only of the *Language* and *Vocabulary* section in units 1-3 and unit 8 as a review of the teaching units 5-7, allowing students to consolidate their knowledge. A detailed overview of the *Sunrise-12* curriculum's pronunciation content is provided in the tables below, which outline the units, page numbers, pronunciation focuses, pronunciation types, and activity types. The components of *Sunrise 12* consist of the Student's Book, the Activity Book, the Teacher's Book, and the CD.

Student's book. Table 5 summarizes the contents of the Student's book.

Table 5

Pronunciation contents in the Sunrise 12 Student's book.

Unit	Pages	Focus	Domain	Activity type in student's book
1.	8	Primary word stress	Prosody	Students listen to words (e.g., <i>conference</i> , <i>American</i> , <i>Kurdistan</i>) and identify which syllable is stressed. They then go through a list of words and decide for each whether the stress is on the first, second, or third syllable.
2.	16	Weak stress	Prosody	Students listen to sentences from a phone conversation and circle the syllables with the weakest stress and underline those with the strongest stress.
3.	25	s sounds	Segments	Students listen to words and phrases and classify words based on whether the 's' is pronounced as /s/ (e.g., <i>seat</i>) or /z/ (e.g., <i>please</i>).
4.	28-31	Revision. Review of units 1-3, focus on the grammar and vocabulary items of the previous units		
5.	36	Short vowels vs. vowel + r	Segments	Students listen to pairs of words (e.g., <i>glad</i> vs. <i>garden</i> , <i>mend</i> vs. <i>merchant</i>) and place them in a table to contrast the vowel sounds. They then practice saying sentences containing these sounds.

6.	44	Rhythm, strong and weak stress	Prosody	The Listen & Understand activity involves listening to a conversation, and imitate pronunciation/ intonation.
7.	52	Silent letters	Segments	1. Read out these words from the discussion on CD in Track 23. Then check their phonetic transcriptions to make sure you have pronounced them correctly. Say which letters are silent. 2. Listen to the words and repeat. 3. Find more words with silent letters.
8.	56-59	Revision. Review of units 5-7, focus on the grammar and vocabulary items of the previous units		
Key words	100-102	Key words of the short story (Treasure Island) are listed with phonetic transcriptions and Kurdish glosses in the literary reader part of the book		
Reference	104	Phonetics = phonetic symbols of consonants & vowels		

Activity Book. Typically, each double-page spread of lessons in the Student's Book is complemented by a corresponding double-page spread of vocabulary and grammar exercises in the Activity Book, which can usually be completed as homework. Table 6 presents a summary.

Table 6

Pronunciation contents in the Sunrise 12 Activity book

Unit	Page	Focus	Domain	Activity type in Activity book
1.	9	Pronunciation of digraph vowel <i>ou</i>	Segments	How is <i>ou</i> pronounced in the following words (<i>drought, shoulder bag, trouble, various, youth</i>)? Write down their transcriptions.
2.	25-a	Other sounds of letter <i>s</i> or <i>ss</i> /ʃ, ʒ/	Segments	Copy the transcription of the following words from Grade 12 alphabetical wordlist. Then practice pronouncing them (<i>commission, dimension, measurement, treasure</i>)
3.	25-b	Sounds of letter <i>c</i> /ʃ, k, s/	Segments	Copy the transcription of the following words from Grade 12 alphabetical wordlist. Then practice pronouncing them (<i>delicious, efficient, specialize</i>)
4.	25-c	Sounds of digraph <i>ch</i> /ʃ, tʃ, k/	Segments	Copy the transcription of the following words from Grade 12 alphabetical wordlist. Then practice pronouncing them (<i>archaeologist, architecture, technique</i>)

Teacher's Book. The Teacher's Book for *Sunrise 12* provides concise and practical lesson plans, along with ideas for lesson starters, extension activities, and alternative exercises. It includes answer keys for both the Student's Book and the Activity Book, a summary of grammar and functions, and a reference section with a word list. Additionally, the Teacher's Book contains the scripts for all listening activities on the CD. The CD includes all the audio materials for listening exercises and pronunciation practice activities. Table 7 presents a summary.

Table 7

Pronunciation contents in Sunrise 12 Teacher's book.

Unit	Page	Type of guide	Aim of the study
1.	15	Listen and read the dialogue (To New York) Track 3 on the CD.	Improve students' reading for detailed information and pronunciation.
	22	1. Review the note on word stress and remind students about syllables. 2. Have students complete a table by identifying the syllable stress pattern (1st, 2nd, or 3rd syllable) for words like <i>conference</i> , <i>American</i> , and <i>Kurdish</i> .	Identify the main stress in words of more than one syllable
2.	27	Write <i>calendar</i> , <i>diary</i> , <i>timetable</i> , <i>work schedule</i> on the board. Model and practise the pronunciation. Elicit or supply the meanings of the words.	Listen to conversations to identify specific items of vocabulary in a group of conversations.
	39	1. Write words on the board (e.g., presentation, practical). 2. Practice pronunciation and identify syllable count. 3. Identify main stress syllable and underline it. 4. Listen to a sentence on CD Track 9 and circle weak stressed syllables.	Practise listening to and saying the weakest and strongest stresses in sentences.
3.	57	1. Listen to words and write them in the correct column (/s/ or /z/). 2. Discuss word placement before listening. 3. Listen to CD Track 12 and complete the task. 4. Compare answers with a partner. 5. Repeat words after the teacher.	Practise listening to, classifying and saying words written with the letter <i>s</i> but pronounced /s/ and /z/.
5.	69	Focus on individual charts and have students read out labels, e.g.: <i>Pie chart e: Urban areas 1.5% (one point five percent)</i> .	Practice pronunciation of new words and numbers with decimal points.
	79	1. Have a student read the instructions aloud. 2. Tell students to: Copy the table with words and transcriptions. Leave space for two additional words per box. 3. Play CD Track 16 Part 1 for students to repeat the words. 4. Have a student read the instruction aloud. 5. Give students 1 minute to review the word list. 6. Prepare students to write words they'll hear. 7. Play Part 2, pausing as needed for students to write. 8. Have students read out completed words and correct pronunciation if necessary.	Raise awareness of and to practice the different pronunciations of vowels in different contexts.

6.	94	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review rhyme schemes in traditional English poems. 2. Have a student read task 1. 3. Students work in pairs to identify and write rhyme schemes for verses 1, 2, and 4. 4. Students write pairs of rhyming words on the board and add phonetics. 5. Have a student read the instruction and review strong and weak stress. 6. Have students mark strong syllables with a dot (·) and weak syllables with a dash (–). 7. Play the recording twice, having students mark the rhythm. 8. Let students compare work in pairs and play the lines one more time. 9. Ask a student to read out the instructions. Emphasize the need to show the rhythm clearly 	Learn more about the rhyme scheme and rhythm of a poem.
7.	112	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask a student to read out the introduction. Highlight the fact that here again students have to use transcriptions. 2. Ask another student to read out the instructions. Let students work in pairs to do the task. 3. Call on individuals to pronounce the words. Other students should listen carefully and offer corrections if necessary. 4. Play CD Track 23 and have the students repeat the words (<i>bridge, debt, through, half, rebuild, when, would</i>) individually and in chorus. 5. Discuss silent letters in words (e.g., archaeological, architecture, boarding pass, Buddhism). 6. Ask students to work in pairs to find more examples in the Alphabetical Wordlist. 	Raise awareness that many English words contain letters that are not pronounced. Give students practice in pronouncing some common ways (which they mostly already know).

Frequency and Type of Pronunciation Activities

Pronunciation instruction in *Sunrise 12* is infrequent and inconsistent. It is confined to the “Skills and Sounds” section, resulting in only six dedicated pronunciation activities across the entire 12th-grade curriculum (Units 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7). The review units (4 and 8) notably omit pronunciation.

The activities are overwhelmingly controlled and drill-based. The primary types are:

- Listen and Repeat*: The most common method, where students imitate a model from the audio CD.
- Classification*: Students categorize words based on sound (e.g., /s/ vs. /z/) or stress patterns.
- Phonetic Transcription*: Used in the Activity Book, requiring students to copy and practice transcriptions from a wordlist.

There is a near-total absence of communicative pronunciation tasks where students use the target features to achieve a real communicative goal.

Coverage of Key Features

The coverage is skewed heavily towards segmental features (individual sounds) and neglects crucial aspects of connected speech.

i. *Segmental Features (Covered):*

- Specific consonant sounds (e.g., /s/ vs. /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/).
- Vowel sounds (e.g., short vowels vs. vowels + r).
- Silent letters.

ii. *Suprasegmental Features (Limited Coverage):*

- Word Stress: Explicitly taught in isolation.
- Sentence-Level Stress & Rhythm: Mentioned in Units 2 and 6, but practice is limited to identifying strong/weak syllables in given sentences or a poem.
- Intonation: Only briefly mentioned in the context of imitating a conversation; not systematically taught.

iii. *Key Features of Connected Speech (Largely Absent):*

- Weak Forms: There is no explicit instruction on the reduced forms of grammatical words, which is essential for natural listening comprehension.
- Linking: The way sounds connect in fluent speech (e.g., *turn_off*) is not addressed.

Strengths and Weaknesses

In this section we will point out the strengths and weaknesses of the *Sunrise-12* teaching method, as identified implicitly in the above summary of its contents.

Strengths

There are at least two strong points of the *Sunrise-12* method:

- The textbook provides a structured, if minimal, introduction to some challenging segmental phonemes and word stress.
- The inclusion of phonetic transcription in the Activity Book and reference section raises students' phonological awareness.

Weaknesses

The strong points are offset by a larger number of weaknesses, the most important of which are:

1. *Severe Neglect of Segmentals:* The focus is on a few sounds but misses the core LFC principle that most consonants are non-negotiable for intelligibility. It covers specific consonants (/s/ vs. /z/, /ʃ/), but does not systematically address all consonant sounds or teach acceptable substitutions.
2. *Severe Neglect of Suprasegmentals and Connected Speech:* The curriculum fails to address this important feature for intelligibility and fluent communication—namely rhythm, intonation, and the sound changes in connected speech.
3. *Lack of Communicative Practice:* The mechanical, drill-based activities are unlikely to transfer to spontaneous speech.
4. *Insufficient Frequency:* With only six activities, pronunciation is treated as a minor, occasional skill rather than an integral part of language learning.

Comparison with Literature

These findings can be contextualized within the existing literature on pronunciation in EFL materials. While some scholars (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Tergujeff, 2015) critique a common overemphasis on segmentals at the expense of suprasegmentals, other perspectives argue that foundational segmental instruction is a priority, though often still insufficient. The analysis of *Sunrise 12* suggests a more fundamental issue: a severe lack of attention to both phonetic domains. The textbook provides inadequate materials for mastering core vowels and consonants, while prosody is reduced to some observations about word stress only. This overall gap aligns with the survey data, which shows that despite high value placed on pronunciation, the textbook fails to meet learners' and teachers' needs

Implications for Teaching

Teachers using *Sunrise 12* cannot rely on the textbook alone for effective pronunciation instruction. They must actively supplement it:

1. *Supplement Suprasegmentals Explicitly:* Use the textbook's minimal coverage as a springboard. For example, after the word stress activity (Unit 1), practice sentence-level stress by having students identify the most important word in a sentence. After the rhythm activity (Unit 6), practice "shadowing" — imitating the rhythm and melody of short audio clips.
2. *Focus on Listening for Features:* Train students to notice weak forms and linking in the textbook's existing audio tracks. Ask questions like "How is the word 'to' pronounced in this sentence?" to raise awareness.
3. *Make Activities Communicative:* Transform drills into tasks. Instead of just repeating minimal pairs (e.g., *ship/sheep*), use them in a game where students must choose the correct word they hear to complete a sentence or identify a picture.
4. *Integrate Pronunciation Consistently:* Provide gentle, focused feedback on one pronunciation feature (e.g., intonation in questions) during any speaking activity, making it a regular part of learning rather than an isolated exercise.

What the LFC Prioritizes vs. What Sunrise 12 Covers

The coverage of key features in the *Sunrise 12* textbook does not align well with the priorities of Jenkins's (2000) Lingua Franca Core (LFC). In fact, the textbook's focus is almost the *opposite* of what the LFC recommends for international intelligibility.

Table 8

Jenkin's (2000) LFC vs. What Sunrise 12 Covers, a point-by-point comparison

		LFC (High Priority)	Sunrise 12 Coverage	Alignment
LFC Features	Consonants	All consonants are vital, except /θ/ and /ð/ (th-sounds), i.e., substitutions (e.g., /t/ or /s/ for /θ/) are acceptable.	Covers specific consonants (/s/ vs. /z/, /ʃ/), but does not systematically address all consonant sounds or teach acceptable substitutions.	Partial/Poor. The focus is on a few sounds but misses the core LFC principle that most consonants are non-negotiable for intelligibility.
	Vowels	The contrast between long and short vowels (e.g., <i>ship</i> vs. <i>sheep</i>) is critical.	Partially covered in Unit 5 (short vowels vs. vowels+r) but not as a systematic long/short vowel contrast.	Poor. This is a cornerstone of LFC but not a clear focus in Sunrise.
	Clusters	Preservation of consonant clusters at the start of words (e.g., <i>spring</i>) is essential. Not adding epenthetic vowels is key.	Not addressed. Sunrise does not teach/practice the production of initial consonant clusters, a major source of intelligibility issues.	Very Poor. A major LFC requirement is completely missing.
	Stress	The correct placement of stress on the most important word in a group is vital for conveying meaning.	Not addressed. The textbook covers word stress but not sentence-level or nuclear stress, which is a central suprasegmental in the LFC.	Very Poor.
	Prosody (other)	Weak Forms, Linking, Assimilation, Pitch Movement are all considered non-essential . They can be omitted without significant loss of intelligibility.	Largely absent , which, from an LFC perspective, is efficient . The book does not waste time on these, though weak stress is mentioned.	Good (by omission). The textbook avoids teaching features the LFC deems unnecessary.

Summary and Conclusion

- i. *Sunrise 12's Focus*: The textbook spends its limited pronunciation space on a mix of some important segmentals (consonants, vowels) and some non-essential supra-segmentals (rhythm, weak stress). It misses several of the LFC's "deal-breakers" for intelligibility.
- ii. *The LFC's Focus*: The LFC prioritizes "the basics that cause misunderstanding": all consonants (except voiced and voiceless *th*), vowel length, initial consonant clusters, and nuclear stress.

Therefore, while both the textbook and the LFC agree that pronunciation is important, their priorities are misaligned. A teacher following only the *Sunrise 12* syllabus would not be systematically addressing the specific phonological features that Jenkins' recommendations identify as be most critical for clear communication between non-native speakers.

A teacher aware of LFC could use the *Sunrise 12* textbook as a starting point but supplement it heavily with activities that practice:

- iii. The clear production of all consonants (especially /p/, /t/, /k/ at the ends of words).
- iv. The distinction between long and short vowels (e.g., *fit* vs. *feet*).
- v. The pronunciation of tricky consonant clusters (e.g., *please*, *try*, *spring*).

- vi. The practice of placing tonic stress on the most important words in a sentence to convey meaning.

Theoretical and Contextual Contributions

This study makes several distinct contributions to the field of EFL pronunciation pedagogy. Theoretically, it provides robust empirical evidence from an under-represented context to support and refine existing critiques of textbook-driven pronunciation instruction (e.g., Tergujeff, 2015; Millard et al., 2020). While previous literature has often highlighted the segmental-suprasegmental imbalance in materials, our findings reveal a more profound dual neglect in the *Sunrise 12* curriculum, where both domains are inadequately addressed. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the textbook's content with the principles of the Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2000), the study offers a concrete, evaluative framework that can be applied to other teaching materials, moving beyond theoretical discussion to practical, criterion-based analysis.

Contextually, this research is significant for its specific focus on the Central Kurdish-speaking EFL learners of Iraqi Kurdistan. It illuminates the unique challenges faced in a region where teachers are highly experienced yet under-trained in phonetics, and where a prescribed national curriculum exerts a powerful influence on classroom practice. The documented disconnect between learner/teacher aspirations and the inadequate textbook provisions provides a critical case study for educational policymakers in Kurdistan and similar contexts where centralized curricula are the norm. By grounding its analysis in the specific phonological distance between Kurdish and English, this study moves away from a one-size-fits-all approach and underscores the necessity for context-sensitive material design that addresses the particular intelligibility hurdles of the target learner population.

Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated a significant and troubling disconnect within the English language curriculum for 12th-grade students in the Kurdistan Region. The findings from both the user perceptions and the textbook analysis converge to reveal a stark contradiction: while teachers and students unanimously recognize pronunciation as a vital component of language learning, the prescribed *Sunrise 12* textbook provides materials that are perceived as insufficient and are, upon analysis, pedagogically inadequate. The curriculum's pronunciation content is not only sparse and infrequent but also misaligned with modern principles of language teaching. It exhibits a pronounced bias towards isolated segmental features at the expense of the suprasegmental features—such as rhythm, sentence stress, and intonation—that are crucial for intelligibility and fluent communication. Furthermore, the reliance on outdated, drill-based activities fails to prepare students for the spontaneous use of pronunciation in real-world interactions, a gap keenly felt by the experienced teachers who are forced to compensate with external materials.

To address these systemic issues, a multi-faceted approach is urgently required. First and foremost, a substantive revision of the *Sunrise 12* textbook is recommended. This revision should prioritize a more balanced and frequent integration of pronunciation, shifting focus towards the suprasegmental features and the core components of intelligibility outlined in frameworks like Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core. Simultaneously, the development and official endorsement of supplementary materials are crucial. These should include communicative

workbooks and authentic audio-visual resources that provide learners with exposure to natural speech patterns and opportunities for practice beyond mechanical drills. However, revised materials alone are insufficient without parallel investment in teacher development. Given that the vast majority of surveyed teachers had no formal training in pronunciation instruction, a comprehensive professional development program is essential. Such training should empower educators with the necessary phonological knowledge and practical classroom techniques to teach pronunciation effectively, enabling them to maximize the use of both the core textbook and any supplementary resources.

Furthermore, the findings of this study highlight the potential of *Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT)* as a powerful tool to address the identified gaps. CAPT technologies, such as speech recognition software, interactive phonemic charts, and visual feedback tools, can provide learners with immediate, individualized practice that is often logistically impossible in a classroom setting. These tools are particularly valuable for supplementing limited textbook materials and supporting teachers who may lack formal training in phonetics (see e.g., Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven, 2017 and references given therein). By integrating CAPT into the curriculum, educators can offer students engaging opportunities for autonomous practice on both segmental and suprasegmental features, thereby bridging the gap between perceived importance and inadequate instructional provision.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which was conducted within Erbil city and identified perceptions and content gaps without measuring actual learning outcomes. This naturally points to productive avenues for future research. Subsequent studies could expand the geographical scope to include rural areas, employ experimental designs to assess the impact of a revised pronunciation syllabus on student intelligibility, or engage in action research to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed teacher training initiatives. Ultimately, the evidence presented in this study compellingly argues that enhancing the pronunciation capabilities of Kurdish learners requires a concerted effort to reform the curriculum, enrich the available resources, and empower the teaching workforce. By addressing these critical areas, stakeholders can ensure that students are equipped with the pronunciation skills necessary for successful and confident global communication.

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