This presentation introduces a longitudinal study connected to a classroom trial of English language showering in an elementary school in Finland. The following research questions are investigated:

1. Does language showering affect foreign language pronunciation development in young learners?
2. What kinds of effects can be seen in young learners’ pronunciation development, for example in the facilitation of sounds not included in the Finnish sound inventory?
3. What pedagogical implications can be drawn from the results?

Obtaining a strong foundation for the acquisition of the target language sounds as a young learner may have a significant impact on later pronunciation development and language learning success. In Finland, however, foreign language (FL) education does not usually begin until grade 3. Since 2004, the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education has offered an option for schools to start earlier, but only a few schools have chosen to provide any form of FL tuition during the first two years of comprehensive school (Kangasvieri et al. 2012). Language showering is one of the options available to schools. It involves exposing children to a limited daily use of a FL.

The data consists of recordings collected over four years in a Finnish elementary school during and after the classroom trial. Speech samples were rated by native and near-native raters for pronunciation intelligibility and accuracy and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show whether a low-immersion technique, such as language showering, has an effect on the acquisition of English sound segments in Finnish-speaking children.

References:


Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Young learners, Pronunciation development.