
**Pronunciation in English as lingua
franca communication: How do people
from different ‘gown trees’ understand
each other?**

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Tutkimuksessa selvitetään, kuinka englantia vieraana kielenä puhuvien suomalaisten ääntämisen piirteet vaikuttavat puheen/viestin ymmärrettävyyteen, kun vastaanottajana on joku toisesta maasta kotoisin oleva englantia vieraana kielenä puhuva henkilö. Tutkimus pohjautuu Jennifer Jenkinsin tutkimukseen 'Englanti kansainvälisenä kielenä' (English as lingua franca).

Tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan seuraaviin kysymyksiin: 1) Miten /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/, /k/ äänteiden ääntäminen vaikuttaa viestin ymmärrettävyyteen, kun vastaanottajana on toinen eri kieltä äidinkielenään ja englantia vieraana kielenä puhuva henkilö? 2) Kuinka suomalainen perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelma ottaa huomioon ymmärrettävän ääntämisen merkityksen englannin kielen opetuksessa (ei-natiivien englannin puhujien keskustelussa)?

Vastauksen saamiseksi järjestettiin kaksi eri testiä: ääntämistesti ja kuuntelutesti. Ääntämistestissä suomalaiset yhdeksäsluokkalaiset oppilaat lukivat tallenteelle ääneen englanninkielisen tekstin, jonka sitten kolme Saksasta, Espanjasta ja Ranskasta kotoisin olevaa yliopiston opiskelijaa kuuntelivat. Opiskelijoiden tehtävänä oli analysoida kuullut sanat ja lauseet foneettisin merkein. Tarkoituksena oli muodostaa tilanne, jossa sekä puhujina että kuuntelijoina olivat englantia vieraana kielenä puhuvat osapuolet.

Tutkimuksen ensimmäisessä osassa selvitetään ensin suomen ja englannin fonologisia eroja ja kurkistetaan suomen opetussuunnitelmaan fonologian osalta. Lisäksi esitellään Jennifer Jenkinsin tutkimus (English as lingua franca) ja teoriat, joille tutkimus pohjautuu. Tutkimuksen toinen, empiirinen, osa kartoittaa ääntämis- ja kuuntelutestitutkimukset ja tulokset.

Tutkimustulokset ovat verrattavissa Jenkinsin teoriaan. /θ/ ja /ð/ - äänteiden erilaiset substituutiot äännettäessä eivät vaikuta ymmärrettävyyteen, toisin kuin äänne-erot /p/, /t/ ja /k/- äänteissä. Äännettäessä /p/, /t/ ja /k/- äänteitä, tarvittava aspiraatio on tärkeää kyseisten äänteiden perässä. Muuten äänteet sekoittuvat helposti soinnillisiin pareihinsa (/b/, /d/ ja /g/) ja saattavat muuttaa sanan tarkoituksen toiseksi. Tämä taas johtaa ymmärrettävyyden vaikeuteen kontekstissa.

Kansainvälistyvässä maailmassa, missä nykypäivänä todennäköisin keskustelukumppani on ei-natiivi englannin kielen puhuja, tämä tutkimustulos tukeekin ajatusta suomalaisen ääntämisen opetuksen painopisteen uudelleen pohdinnalle. Foneettisten merkkien opetus ei välttämättä ole tehokkaimmassa käytössä suomalaisessa englannin ääntämisen opetuksessa. Se olisikin varteenotettava lisä uutta opetussuunnitelmaa suunniteltaessa. Varsinkin opetettaessa /p/, /t/ ja /k/- äänteitä, opetuksessa olisi hyvä asettaa paino aspiraation merkitykselle.

Asiasanat: fonologia, lingua franca, ymmärrettävyys, ääntämisen opetus.

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Examples from the pronunciation extracts spoken by Finnish EFL learners.

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1 Introduction

The speech of Finnish English as a foreign language (EFL) speakers may exhibit pronunciation characteristics that result from such speakers imperfectly learning the pronunciation of English, either by transferring the phonological rules from their mother tongue into their English speech ("interference") or by implementing strategies similar to those used in primary language acquisition. They may also create innovative pronunciations for English sounds not found in the EFL speakers' first language.

At the moment, the amount of speakers of English as a foreign language in the world is bigger than the amount of speakers of English as their native language. The expansion of the use of English in this direction has been documented and discussed by applied linguists in the recent years. The goal of learning is more often to be able to use English as a *lingua franca*, i.e. as an international language in communication with other non-native speakers, than as a foreign language in communication with its native speakers. Since there is an effect of the pronunciation features on the second language (L2), or the foreign language, from the first language (L1), this is often the area that threatens the intelligibility in the communication.

Why is proper pronunciation important? Without correct pronunciation, it may be very difficult for listeners to understand what one says, no matter how large the speaker's vocabulary may be, no matter how well the speaker understands and uses grammatical rules and no matter what their level of reading or writing skills may be. This is a big hindrance to communication. In addition, some research indicates that if

an EFL speaker cannot pronounce a word correctly, they may not be able to hear it when spoken by another person either, which further hinders communication.

When educators discuss the issue of standards, they generally focus on grammatical differences and, to a lesser extent, on lexical and phonological variation. This thesis concentrates on pronunciation features, more specifically on /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds, and discusses those items and their role in mutual intelligibility between non-native speakers of English. The discussion is based on Jennifer Jenkins' *Lingua Franca Core* and the Finnish national curriculum. The sounds /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ were chosen because of their specific characteristics in English compared to Finnish, i.e. the fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ do not occur in the Finnish language and in Finnish, there is no aspiration after the /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds. In order to explore the pronunciation of the sounds, a pronunciation and a listening test were arranged, which are explained and analysed in the empirical part of this study. The idea of the tests is to analyse the pronunciation of Finnish EFL learners and the intelligibility of the sounds through the listening test by other non-native speakers of English, i.e. speakers originating from different countries. The main aim of this thesis is to find out the problematic differences in pronouncing /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds in mutual intelligibility and communication between Finnish EFL speakers and other non-native speakers of English. In other words, the aim of this thesis is:

- 1) to discuss the major differences in the English and Finnish phonological systems;
- 2) to discuss the notion of English as *lingua franca* and its requirements in the successful communication between non-native speakers of English;

- 3) to explore the pronunciation of /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/, /k/ sounds of Finnish EFL learners and discuss them from the point of view of mutual intelligibility with other non-native speakers of English;
- 4) and to think about the ways of redefining the national curriculum and EFL syllabus in terms of phonology teaching.

In the theoretical part of this thesis, I will concentrate on phonology and phonetics of English, as well as on the differences between the pronunciation systems of Finnish and English. I will also make reference to the current national curriculum and the syllabus of EFL teaching in Finland. In chapter three, the notion of English as *Lingua Franca* is introduced. The empirical part of this study consists two chapters. The first one introduces method, participants, procedure and data analysis. The second consists of analysis and results.

2 Pronunciation and phonology/phonetics of English and language teaching

When talking about pronunciation in language learning we talk about the production and perception of different sounds of a language and their meaning in different contexts of language use. Pronunciation plays a central role in our personal and social lives; our identities, individualities and memberships in a certain community. Often, our pronunciation is responsible for the intelligibility. (Seidlhofer, 2001, 56)

The phonetic (or the phonologic) part of language teaching is commonly understood to include mainly the articulatory guidance; where to put one's tongue in pronouncing a word or a sound, how to do the different positioning of the mouth, how to breath, etc. The idea of drilling is commonly understood to be pronouncing, and imitating a model, after a recorded tape or teacher, either alone or all learners together. Naturally, the new sounds of an L2, especially those which do not appear in the L1, are part of teaching the phonology of a new language but they are not the most important part of language learning. It is vital for a learner of L2 to be able to recognise the new sound, not just to be able to articulate them. The most difficult part is to learn the proper use of the phonetic sounds in L2, even though they were familiar from L1. (Laaksonen 1971, 3-4.) As H.A. Gleason (in: Laaksonen 1971, 4) puts it:

The process of learning a second language involves, among other things, learning to make distinctions, both in hearing and speaking, that are phonemic in the new language, and learning to overlook those distinctions which are not significant, even though they may be phonemic in the mother tongue. Often the two languages will use very similar sounds but organize them into quite different phonemic systems. Learning new uses of old sounds is usually a larger and more difficult part of the problem than the mastering of wholly new sounds. Unfortunately, this part of the work is easily neglected. Few students of foreign languages are aware either of its magnitude or of its importance. Textbooks all too frequently aggravate the situation by describing the pronunciation in a most misleading manner.

Language learning is learning a new set of habit. It is necessary for a learner to make the efforts to try to produce the sounds in a new language as a native speaker produces them. The learner's very first problem in learning a new language is to gain the automatic control of those aspects of the language that are habitual for the native speaker. (Collier-Macmillan 1968, 5-9.) "Since L1 pronunciation is to a considerable extent the product of habit, its features are likely to be transferred automatically in the production of a second language" (Jenkins, 2000, 171). According to Seidlhofer (2001, 62), the effective teaching of pronunciation requires at least three kinds of competence of teachers: "linguistic proficiency in the target language, knowledge about this language, and the ability to identify and select specific aspects of language and combine them for presentation and practice in ways which are effective for learning". Teachers need to be good models and good instructors for the correct pronunciation of the target language.

2.1 General characteristics of phonology/phonetics

Due to the nature of this study, it is important to briefly define the basic characteristics of the terms *phonology*, *phonetics* and *phonemes*. According to David Crystal (1991, 261), *phonology* is "a branch of linguistics which studies the sound systems of languages. [...] The sounds are organized into a system of contrasts, which are analysed in terms of phonemes, distinctive features, or other such 'phonological units', according to the theory used. The aim of phonology is to demonstrate the patterns of distinctive sound found in a language, and to make as general statements as possible about the nature of sound systems in the languages of the world." *Phonetics*, on the other hand, is the field of science which studies the characteristics of the human sound-making and the sounds used in speech. Phonetics provides methods for the descriptions, classifications and transcriptions of sounds. There are

three branches of the subject that are generally recognized: 1) articulatory phonetics, 2) acoustic phonetics and 3) auditory phonetics. The first branch studies the way the speech sounds are made (or articulated) by the vocal organs. The second branch is the study of the physical properties of speech sound, as they are transmitted between mouth and ear, whereas the third branch concentrates on the study of the perceptual response to speech sounds, as mediated by ear, auditory nerve and brain.

Phonemes are the minimal units in the sound system, i.e. the smallest meaning distinguishing sound units in the abstract representation of the sound of a language. Phonemes function contrastively. Under the notion of the phoneme, there are many different versions of that sound type regularly produced in actual speech. These different versions are called *phones* and they are said to be the realisations of the phonemes. Their variants are also referred to as *allophones* of the phonemes. (Crystal, 1991, 258-260; Yule, 2006, 43-46) In conclusion, it can be summarized that phonology is the study of the overall system for analysing phonological units and patterns of speech sounds in a language and phonetics is the realisation and the study of the characteristics of the speech sounds in this system.

In connection with speech, the meaning distinguishing units are called sounds or phonemes, as stated above. In connection with writing, these units are called letters or graphemes, or phonetic symbols. When teaching pronunciation, one is automatically involved with phonetics. The most common set of phonetic symbols is called International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA provides a single symbol for each sound in the language and a set of conventions for their interpretation. In many cases where the pronunciation is confused by the obscuring certain syllables, it is helpful to transcribe a word into phonetic script. A phonemic transcription is an optimal system

of orthography because of the one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes. (Clarey & Dixon, 1963, 8-10; Lintunen, 2004, 12-13)

As the IPA handbook (1999, quoted in Lintunen, 2004, 19) states, the IPA is based on the following basic assumptions:

1. Some aspects of speech are linguistically relevant, whilst others (such as personal voice quality) are not.
2. Speech can be represented partly as a sequence of discrete sounds or 'segments'.
3. Segments can usefully be divided into two major categories, consonants and vowels.
4. The phonetic description of consonants and vowels can be made with reference to how they are produced and their auditory characteristics.
5. In addition to the segments, a number of 'suprasegmental' aspects of speech, such as stress and tone need to be presented independently of the segments.

There are 26 letters in the English alphabet but more than 50 different and distinct sounds. The sounds are generally divided into two main groups – vowels and consonants (see appendix 1 for IPA charts).

2.2 Differences between the pronunciation systems; English and Finnish

Finnish and English have some general differences that may create difficulties for a Finnish EFL learner. The biggest difference may be the difference in the relationship between orthography and phonology. Compared to Finnish, English sounds and spelling do not correspond in one-to-one relationship. Laaksonen (1971, 17-18) divides these differences between English and Finnish into four major categories; physical, relational, distributional and segmental differences. Physical differences include the phonetic differences that the other language lacks. Compared to Finnish, these are for example the English fricatives [θ, ð]. When talking about the relational differences in L1 and L2, one means the physically similar sounds that are different

phonemes, e.g. [w] which in Finnish is an allophone for /v/ but in English an independent phoneme. The third group, distributional differences, deals with same sounds as variants for the same phoneme but in different environments. For example the lateral /l/ has got different grades of shades in pronouncing it in different environments. The last group, segmental differences, has got something to do with the differences in the phonetic systems, i.e. when both languages include similar speech- or sound patterns which are understood as different phonemic groups; e.g. *halapa* – *halpa* (understood as the same thing), but in English *scalping* – *scalloping* do not follow the same pattern and cannot be understood with a similar meaning. As Kenworthy (1987, 96) puts it, “the problems of the reader and the writer are not the same; the latter must recall patterns, and the former must decipher or decode patterns”. In English, the reader’s problems are usually simpler than the writer’s. For example in the word *knight*, the ‘k’ is a silent letter when pronouncing the word. On the other hand, a listener can mix it with the word *night*.

The mistakes in hearing and pronouncing words in a foreign language can, usually, occur due to the differences explained above. The similarities and the differences between L1 and L2 cause commonly the main problems when acquiring the new language. The unclear hearing of phonetic differences creates many typical pronunciation mistakes for a Finnish learner of English. It is difficult to spot and pronounce word pairs such as *veal/wheel*, *vie/why*, *vile/while*, etc. Also the duration of the sounds (short and long) has a distinctive meaning in understanding, e.g. *fill/feel*. The duration causes problems for Finns, too. In his dissertation, Lintunen (2004, 65) presents a study where the Finnish EFL speakers store words more often in their written than their phonological form and native speakers of Finnish are not accustomed to making a clear distinction between the written and spoken forms of

words. This factor is often connected with pronunciation errors. This naturally leads to the problems in mutual intelligibility between the speaker and the interlocutor.

In this study, the primary focus is on the plosive sounds /p/, /t/ and /k/ and the fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/. The plosive sound starts with a closure of the mouth and/or nose. The flow of air builds up and finally the closure is released, creating an explosion of air. In phonetics, *aspiration* is the strong burst of air that accompanies either the release or the closure of some obstruents. To feel or see the difference between aspirated and unaspirated sounds, one can put a hand in front of one's mouth, and say *tore* ([t^hɔɹ]) and then *store* ([stɔɹ]). One should either feel a puff of air with *tore* that one does not get with *store*. In most dialects of English, the /t/ is aspirated in *tore* and unaspirated in *store*. (E.g. Lintunen, 2004, 76-78; Yule, 2006, 35-37.) The plosive sounds /p/, /t/ and /k/ are chosen for this study because of their different ways of pronunciation in English and Finnish. Finnish speakers do not tend to use aspiration, when pronouncing these sounds in initial position in words.

Fricative sounds are produced when the articulators are brought so closely together that the sounds are accompanied by audible friction. Fricatives may be *voiced* (vocal cords vibrating during the articulation of the fricative) or *voiceless* (vocal cords not vibrating during the articulation of the fricative). (E.g. Lintunen, 2004, 78-80; Yule, 2006, 35-37.) The fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are chosen for this study because they do not exist in Finnish and are, therefore, new sounds for EFL learners.

2.3 The teaching of pronunciation in the Finnish national curriculum

The Finnish national curriculum (Internet source 3) for foreign languages, especially for English, mentions the learning/teaching of pronunciation only briefly, referring to the Common European Framework for Languages and its stages. At the end of the primary school (years 1-6 of the comprehensive school), the curriculum for the city of Tampere (Internet source 4) mentions the skills for pronunciation in the following way; *the pronunciation may cause some huge problems in understanding* (free translation by writer).

During the Finnish comprehensive school (after 4-7 years of learning English), pupils are expected to communicate in the following way in speaking (translated by the writer):

After the year 7:	One pronounces the most common words in a comprehensible way, but makes a lot of pronunciation mistakes and, because of that, the message isn't always understood by the listener.
After the year 8:	Pronunciation is intelligible even if a foreign accent is clearly evident and mispronunciations occur.
After the year 9:	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.

Table 1: Pronunciation skills after each year in Finnish secondary school (The Finnish national curriculum, Internet source 3)

Finnish foreign language teaching and assessing follow the principles of the Common European Framework for languages (hereafter CEFL, Internet source 1). At the end of the nine-year comprehensive school (after 6-7 years of learning English as a foreign language), the pupils are expected to reach the following stages in the CEFL (because of the nature of this thesis, I have mainly focused on the speaking skill in this table):

Listening: *toimiva peruskielitaito (working language skills) (B1.1):* The student can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives. The student can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.

Speaking: *kehittyvä peruskielitaito (developing language skills) (A2.2):* The student can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. He/she can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord. Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. The student can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.

Reading comprehension: *toimiva peruskielitaito (working language skills) (B1.1):* The student can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension. He/she can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.

Writing: *kehittyvä peruskielitaito (developing language skills) (A2.2):* The student can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need. He/she can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail. The student can take a short, simple message provided he/she can ask for repetition and reformulation.

Table 2: English at the end of the 9th grade of the Finnish comprehensive school. (The Finnish national Curriculum and the CEFL stages, Internet sources 3, 4 and 5; translated by the writer)

In the CEFL, different learner/user views are taken into account in terms of learning teaching and assessing languages. In the chapter of the communicative competence, the notion of phonological competence is mentioned. According to the CEFL, “the phonological competence involves a knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of:

- the sound-units (phonemes) of the language and their realisation in particular contexts (allophones);
- the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes (distinctive features, e.g. voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion);
- the phonetic composition of words (syllable structure, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones);
- sentence phonetics (prosody)
- sentence stress and rhythm
- intonation;
- phonetic reduction
- vowel reduction
- strong and weak forms
- assimilation
- elision (CEFL, 116-117).

The users of the CEFL are suggested to consider what new phonological skills are required from the learner, what the relative importance of sounds and prosody is and whether phonetic accuracy and fluency are an early learning objective or developed as a longer term objective (CEFL, 117).

The CEFL also deals with the methodology of language teaching and provides a very general approach on how the learners are expected to learn a second language. Under the very brief chapter on *pronunciation*, the framework provides a check-list; how should learners be expected, or required, to develop to pronounce a language:

- a) simply by exposure to authentic spoken utterances;
- b) by chorused imitation of i) the teacher; ii) audio-recorded native speakers;
- iii) video-recorded native speakers;

- c) by individualised language laboratory work;
- d) by reading aloud phonetically weighted textual material;
- e) by ear-training and phonetic drilling;
- f) as d) and e) but with the use of phonetically transcribed texts;
- g) by explicit phonetic training;
- h) by learning orthoepic conventions (i.e. how to pronounce written forms);
- i) by some combination of the above. (CEFL, 153)

These practices are taken into account in Finnish foreign language teaching. The drilling and practising of the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds are started already in the primary school. These sounds do not exist in Finnish, so their introduction is done during the first year of EFL learning. The practising of the /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds is done throughout the comprehensive school.

3 English as *Lingua Franca*

This chapter defines the term English as *lingua franca* and discusses its meaning for language teaching. The main attention is on the pronunciation and intelligibility part of English as *lingua franca* in foreign language teaching.

3.1 What is English as *lingua franca*?

In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion of the status of English as *lingua franca* (hereafter ELF). English language has spread all over the world through colonialization, emigration and globalization and it is used as a first, a second and a foreign language for internal, external and international purposes. Kachru (quoted in Kuo, 2006, 213) draws attentions to the different dimensions which he distinguishes between the Inner Circle (e.g. UK and the USA), the Outer Circle (e.g. India and Nigeria) and the Expanding Circle (e.g. China and France). In fact, it is the users in the Expanding Circle who actually strengthen further the awareness and usage of English as an international or universal language. According to Seidlhofer (2004, 211), for the first time in history, a language has reached global dimensions and the language expansion, being shaped by at least as much by its non-native speakers as its native speakers, has been accelerated through the electronic communication, e.g. the Internet. The language is used for practical purposes by people with varied norms and scopes of proficiency between participants who do not control standard grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation (Seidlhofer, 2004, 212). The term *lingua franca* actually means a contact language that is used among people who do not share a first language and the term is commonly understood to mean a second language of its speakers (Jenkins, 2007, 1). Compared to other terms, such as International English, Global

English etc., ELF has a number of advantages that are not shared by the other terms.

As Jenkins (2000, 11) puts it:

ELF emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s, i.e. the primary reason for learning English today; it suggests the idea community as opposed to alienness; it emphasizes that people have something in common rather than their differences; it implies that 'mixing' languages is acceptable ... and thus that there is nothing inherently wrong in retaining certain characteristics of the L1, such as accent; finally, the Latin name symbolically removes the ownership of English from the Anglos both to no one and, in effect, to everyone.

In this global spread of English, the concept of "world Englishes" has become very popular since linguistic diversity is inevitable and the phonological and morphosyntactical variations can be seen in all varieties of English. Kuo (2006, 214) states in her article that English, being the language for international communication, is used by more non-native speakers than native speakers, especially when most non-native speakers need English in order to communicate with other non-native speakers. According to Kuo (2006, 213), "it has been suggested that native speakers and their Englishes have become relatively unimportant in international communication and that research interests should now fall on non-native speakers and their use of English". She also argues that the general public should reconsider their attachment to native-speaker norms and gradually start to think about the advantages and requirements of ELF in terms of second language pedagogy. As an example of pronunciation, Jenkins (2002, 84) draws attention to a very interesting fact; RP (Received Pronunciation, the prestige form of British English pronunciation) is thought to be spoken by fewer than three per cent of the speaking population, while majority of British people have either regionally modified RP or a regional accent. The RP is most likely inaccessible to the Finnish learners because of their high social position. This aspect is quite interesting through the concept of Finnish English teaching, because almost all the teaching and learning materials are still mainly based

on the RP. The question is why the Finnish learners should study a long time to learn a variety of English spoken by people they are highly unlikely to meet.

3.2 Teaching English as *lingua franca*

It seems that when the global role of English is changing in its forms and its uses, there is also a need to change something in the teaching of it. As Seidlhofer (2004, 225) states, “linguistic descriptions that teaching professional can refer to if they wish *are* becoming available”. According to Jenkins (2002, 83), L2 pedagogy should no longer prepare learners to achieve intelligibility for native-speaker receivers or aim to develop the kind of communicative competence based on descriptions of a native-speaker model. Kue (2006, 214) suggests that “a better way to prepare learners for international communication would be to provide a description, within the field of phonology and morphosyntax, of what learners need in order to achieve and sustain mutual comprehension”.

McKay (2002, 125) argues that there should be “a comprehensive theory of teaching and learning English as an international language”. She (2002, 103) also says that the educators should no longer look to Inner Circle countries for target models in English teaching. Seidlhofer (2004, 226) summarizes the teaching goals and approaches from McKay (2002, 127-129): the first teaching goal should be the ensuring intelligibility between the speakers rather than insisting on correctness. The second teaching goal should be helping learners to develop interaction strategies to achieve comity – friendly relations. The third teaching goal should be fostering textual competence (i.e. developing reading and writing skills for learner-selected purposes). The approaches for these goals are: 1) “the sensitivity in the choice of cultural content in materials”, 2) “reflexivity in pedagogical procedures” and 3) “respect for the local culture of

learning” (Seidlhofer, 2004, 226). “The most radical changes in English teaching are likely to happen once rethinking in pedagogy and reconceptualization in language description find expression in new curricula and materials” (Seidlhofer, 2004, 226).

Jenkins (2002, 83) suggests a revised pronunciation syllabus, the Lingua Franca Core (see chapter 3.3), in which the intelligibility for non-native speaker rather than native speaker receivers is the primary motivation. She was able to propose this core “after establishing which pronunciation features impeded mutual intelligibility in her empirical studies of what she terms ‘interlanguage talk’ among ‘non-native’ speakers of English” (Seidlhofer 2001, 142). This procedure was an empirical basis for her suggestion “to scale down the phonological task for the majority of learners by focusing pedagogic attention on those items which are essential in terms of intelligible pronunciation” (Jenkins 2000, 123). She also prioritizes features which are more relevant and more realistic learning targets for English as international language speakers. As Seidlhofer (2001, 142) puts it, Jenkins’ Lingua Franca Core does not include some sounds which are regarded and taught as particularly English ones by most learners and teachers. These include e.g. the phonemes /θ/ and /ð/. This means that these sounds proved not to be crucial for mutual intelligibility and their various substitutions e.g. /f, v/ or /s, z/ or /t, d/ for the dental fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are understandable and permissible in the pronunciation. Because of the nature of this study, this is a highly interesting fact.

3.3 Lingua Franca Core (LFC)

The aim of Jenkins' research for the LFC was to identify the segmental and suprasegmental features that obstruct the intelligibility of pronunciation in ELF interaction when pronounced with L1 influence. As Jenkins (2000, 95) puts it, the core's aim is to create "a set of unifying features which, at the very least, has the potential to guarantee that pronunciation will not impede successful communication in EIL settings". Through her research, it was possible to distinguish between L1-influenced pronunciation features that did and did not obstruct successful communication among non-native speakers of English from different L1s. The features that caused problems were assigned to the LFC, while those that did not were designated non-core. Table 3 summarizes the main features for ELF communication (i.e. the features that are important for intelligible pronunciation when English is used as lingua franca among its non-native speakers) in comparison with those features that are typically considered necessary for EFL communication. (Jenkins, 2007, 22-24)

	EFL target Traditional syllabus	ELF target Lingua Franca Core
1. The consonantal inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all sounds close RP/GA (General American) RP non-rhotic /r/ GA rhotic /r/ RP intervocalic [t] GA intervocalic [ɾ] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all sounds except /θ/, /ð/ but approximations of all others acceptable rhotic /r/ only intervocalic [t] only
2. Phonetic requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspiration after /p/, /t/, /k/ appropriate vowel length before fortis/lenis consonants
3. Consonant clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all word positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word initially, word medially

4. Vowel quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-short contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-short contrast
5. Tonic (nuclear) stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critical

Table 3 : EFL (English as a foreign language) and ELF pronunciation targets: core features (Jenkins 2007, 23; 2002, 99)

According to Jenkins (2002, 97) there is a certain amount of English pronunciation that cannot be learnt and taught successfully in classrooms, no matter how much time or effort is expended by teachers and learners. The table 4 below lists the non-core items, comparing and contrasting them with the pronunciation features to be found in an EFL syllabus.

	EFL target Traditional syllabus	ELF target Lingua Franca Core
1. Vowel quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close to RP/GA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 (consistent) regional varieties
2. Weak forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unhelpful to intelligibility
3. Features of connected speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsequential and may be unhelpful
4. Stress-timed rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unnecessary
5. Word stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can reduce flexibility/ unteachable
6. Pitch movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essential for indicating attitudes and grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unnecessary/ unteachable

Table 4: EFL and ELF pronunciation targets: The non-core features (Jenkins, 2007, 24; 2002, 99)

According to Jenkins (2007, 25), the Lingua Franca Core is frequently misinterpreted as a model of imitation. This is not the case. It is a core of pronunciation features which occur in successful communication between non-native speakers and its absence leads to miscommunication. However, teaching of the LFC is necessary, yet it is not sufficient. Speakers need to develop the ability to adjust their pronunciation

according to the communication situation and toward their listeners. Factors such as overload, nerves and emotions can intrude the learners and the transfer from one's native language will affect the L2 learning and adjusting. One must also be willing to use the new habits in interactions.

4 The empirical part of the study

In the empirical part of this study, I will concentrate on a few phonological items and their role in terms of intelligibility and language teaching. These phonological items are the /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds. I chose the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds because of the fact that they do not exist in the Finnish language. The reason for choosing the /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds is that Finnish EFL learners tend not to produce the needed aspiration after these sounds, especially when they are in initial position in a word.

What are the major issues in the pronouncing of the /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds that may affect the mutual intelligibility in a negative way in non-native speaker communication? Are these pronunciation differences crucial in terms of mutual intelligibility and communication? How do the grades correlate with their performance and achievement? How and why should the Finnish national curriculum for English be changed in terms of pronunciation teaching? How should they be taught, or should they be ignored, in Finnish language teaching?

This chapter provides a description of the aim, participants, materials, procedure and data analysis. In this chapter, two different tests are referred to as followed: the recorded pronunciation test is referred to as the *pronunciation test*, whereas the listening test is simply referred to as the *listening test*.

4.1 Method

The study consists of a pronunciation test and a listening test. The aim of the pronunciation test was to get authentic material of the pronunciation data spoken by some Finnish EFL learners. The reason for doing the listening test was to find out how other non-native speakers of English understand the speech of Finnish non-native

learners of English. The starting point for the study was to divide an amount of pupils in to two categories based on their pronunciation in English. In the listening test, apart from one extract, only the results from the weakest pupils, in terms of pronunciation, are used. Their pronunciation test results are then studied through the theoretical part of this study. The aim of the pronunciation test is to spot the differences in the pronunciation of /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds, and to compare the differences with the Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core. In order to examine the pronunciation features in the output of two non-native speakers (NNS) of English, the extracts produced by Finnish non-native speakers of English were listened to and analysed by three other non-native speakers of English, originating from Germany, Spain and France. This is how the non-native/non-native speaker situation was realized. The listening test was conducted through listening to the recorded materials and a question sheet (appendix 3).

4.2 Participants, materials and procedure

The participants in the pronunciation test for this study are Finnish ninth-grade pupils who are learning English as their first foreign language. They had all learned English for seven years. They participated in a national English test (*englannin valtakunnallinen koe*) in their last year of the comprehensive school. The test consists of four parts; grammar, listening comprehension, written essay and speaking activities. This study concentrates on the speaking activity. In the speaking activity, pupils are asked to read a text aloud and they had a few minutes before test to read and to get to know the text silently. Their pronunciation was assessed with *good*, *sufficient* or *poor*. The different texts can be found in the appendix 2.

The speaking test was conducted in May 2009 on the premises of the participants' school. The test took place in the corridor and a portable mp3 recorder was used. A language lab was not available. The teacher of the class was present (also in the role of the researcher) and the pupils conducted the test in pairs taking turns. Pupils received no guidance with the pronunciation or meaning once they had the text before them. After the test, no immediate feedback was given.

The listening test was conducted in October 2009 on the premises of the University of Tampere. All the three participants in the listening test were university students, females, and speaking English as non-native speakers. The test person 1 (TP1) was from Spain, the test person 2 (TP2) from France and the test person was 3 (TP3) from Germany. After listening through all the extracts from the pronunciation test, three pupils and altogether four extracts from their tests for the listening test were chosen. In the listening test, the participants listened to the extracts chosen by the researcher, and were asked to fill in a question sheet (appendix 3) based on what they heard. The first part of the question sheet, and the listening test, concentrated on understanding and transcribing the extracts using the phonetic alphabet. The participants were also asked to analyse the intelligibility. The second part of the question sheet asked the participants to compare two different extracts and concentrate on the /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds. The third part of the question sheet concentrated on the pronunciation features of the Finnish non-native speakers of English and how these features were understood by other non-native speakers of English.

5 Analysis and results

The data analysis focuses on the pupils' pronunciation of the English words and sounds, containing the dental fricatives /θ/, /ð/, and the plosives /p/, /t/, /k/. The analysis is made through the listening test conducted by the foreign university students. In this chapter, the results are presented analysed individually followed by examples and further discussion. I will also compare the results with the *Lingua Franca Core* by Jennifer Jenkins. Finally, I will discuss the results in terms of Finnish English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching.

5.1 Pronunciation test

In the pronunciation test, the test results turned out to be very heterogeneous, as was the tested group of pupils according to their grades in English. Due to their pronunciation, only the weakest pupils were chosen for the first part of the listening test. As the main factors for choosing just these pupils were their level of pronunciation and the idea of them being very far from the native speaker model. Unfortunately, at some points the recording was not from a good quality due to the background noises but also some of the pupils spoke really silently. Because of the poor pronunciation, the extracts were sometimes very hard to understand without having the original written form text available. Their pronunciation is partly very weak and they pronounce words partly in their written form and with a heavy Finnish NNS of English accent. These facts prevent the intelligibility at some parts of the text.

The extract A pupil has a grade 8 (in the grading system of 4 to 10, grade 10 being the best) in English, although was taken into this test due to her poor pronunciation. The extract B pupil has a grade 6, the extract C and D pupil has a grade 5 in English.

In the following table (5), there are some examples of the pronunciation spoken by the pupils. In the first column, *Extract*, the letters indicate the recorded samples taken into the listening test. In the second column, *Word (sound)*, the written form word is shown and after it, the sound that is studied. In the third column, *Native speaker model*, the proper native target-like pronunciation is written, by using the phonetic alphabet. Whereas, the fourth column, *Pupil's production*, indicates the produced pronunciation by the pupil, again, written in the phonetic alphabet. In order to understand the aspirated sounds better, I have added the symbol /^h/ to highlight the needed use of aspiration.

Extract	Word (sound)	Native speaker model	Pupil's production
A	entering /t/	/ɛn t ^h ərɪŋ/	/ɛn dərɪŋ/
A	cultures /k/	/k ^h ʌltʃərs/	/kultʊrəs/
B	talk /t/	/t ^h ɔk/	/dɔlk/
B	people /p/	/p ^h ɪ:pəl/	/bɪ:plə/
B	another /ð/	/ənʌðər/	/ʌnʌθɛr/
C	countries /k/	/k ^h ʌn trɪ:z/	/gəʊn trɪ:s/
D	told /t/	/t ^h oʊld/	/dold/
D	to /t/	/t ^h ə/	/dʊ/

Table 5: Examples from the pronunciation extracts spoken by Finnish EFL learners.

As can be seen, none of the aspirated sounds were produced properly. In the next chapter, I will discuss these phenomena in further detail.

5.2 Listening test

In question 1 of the question sheet the participants were asked to *listen to the extracts and to transcribe what they hear using the phonetic alphabet*. Only the TP1 was able to use the phonetic alphabet in the task, the TP2 used normal written forms in “transcribing” and the TP3 used both, the IPA alphabets and normal written form words. The test persons were not told anything about the nature of the test and they were allowed to listen to the extracts as many times as they wanted to. The answered question sheets can be found in appendix 4.

Extract A was easy to follow. It was a sentence from the text D (in appendix 2): “*In some cultures, like Japan for example, people expect you to take off your shoes before entering their house.*” TP 1 and TP2 were able to follow the whole of the sentence and got it right in their transcriptions. TP3 was not able to understand the beginning of the sentence. According to Jenkins’ theory, in the LFC, on the aspiration after a /t/ sound, it was interesting to notice that TP3 wrote the word ‘entering’ using the sound /d/, [enderɪŋ] instead of the correct sound /t/ in the middle of the word. So there was no aspiration to be heard. In table 5 above, the pupil’s pronounced form of the word is [ɛndərɪŋ].

Extract B (from text B, in appendix 2 : “*The use of eye contact between people in different countries varies a lot. In countries where people stand close to one another when they talk, there’s also more eye contact*”) seemed to be quite easy to follow and understand, too. Almost each test person understood the meaning and was able to

write down whole sentences apart from the end of the second sentence, where they all had problems in understanding the words. The word ‘cultures’ was pronounced as [kulturəs] (see table 5) instead of the correct form [k^hʌltʃərs]. TP1 wrote it as ‘kultures’, whereas other test persons understood and wrote it as ‘cultures’. Another interesting fact was the hearing of the word ‘talk’. TP3 wrote it again using the sound /d/, [dalk] instead of hearing the aspirated /t/ that, of course, was not pronounced properly. The /ð/ sound in the word ‘another’, was not pronounced properly, as can be seen in table 5 where the pronunciation of the pupil sounds like [ʌnʌθɛr]. TP1 heard it as [ændter] and TP3 heard it as [oner]. TP2 wrote it as ‘other’.

Extract C (from text A, in appendix 2: “*In the Nordic countries the customs are nowadays quite casual.*”) was hard to understand. The word ‘countries’ received two different transcriptions; [kontri:s] in TP3’s answer and [kəuntriəs] in TP1’s answer.

On the tape, it was pronounced as [gaʊntri:s] (see table 5), where the /k/ was pronounced without aspiration and it was heard as its voiced counterpart. Otherwise, no correct sentence-like answers were found in the test persons’ papers.

Extract D (from text A, in appendix 2: “*It is customary not to use a person’s first name unless you are told to do so.*”) was, again, very hard to understand. All the test persons understood something but were only able to produce single words and did not understand the real meaning of the sentence. The phrase “told to do” was pronounced as [dold dʊ du:] (see table 5), and it was hard to understand. TP2 understood it as “who’s who” and TP 3 wrote just “told to”. All the /d/ and /t/ sounds sounded very similar and no aspiration was used.

The second and third questions in the sheet were: “*Based on what you heard, were there any parts which you didn’t understand? Why?; If yes to 2), were these parts*

words or whole sentences?” According to the results, it seems that extracts A and B were easier to follow and understand but the speaker in extracts C and D was very difficult to understand. TP1 was able to understand more of all the extracts than the two other test persons, maybe because of the very similar sound and pronunciation system between Spanish and Finnish. In extracts C and D, the “speaker was not loud” and her “pronunciation was very different from the standard”. The speaker was “not clear” and she “seemed to stutter a bit”. TP1 thought the speaker “spoke quite slowly”. In TP3’s opinion, the speakers “might be kind of hard to understand for other people from foreign countries”. She wrote that she did not hear any stress on the words. Each test person heard just words during the first listening but after listening to the extracts again, they were able to figure out some of the sentences through the context. At first “there were just words in a row, with pauses”. The third question in the first part of the question sheet was: “*Did you understand the main idea? How?*” Test persons 2 and 3 were not able to figure out the main ideas in extracts C and D, even though they heard the most important words in the sentences. Whereas TP1 wrote that her background knowledge of the topic helped her to figure out the meaning. She also wrote that “their pronunciation was similar to that of the Spaniards when they are learning English, that is, we tend to pronounce things as they would be in Spanish, and I find it is quite similar to what these students are doing”.

In the second part of the question sheet ‘comparison’, the test persons were asked to listen to two new extracts spoken by different pupils than in the first part of the listening test. Now, the first speaker was a pupil with a grade nine in English, whereas the second speaker had a grade seven. The test persons were asked to “*compare the two extracts you hear. What are the main differences? How do these differences affect the intelligibility?*”. Each test person wrote that speaker 1 was more fluent, more understandable, closer to standard and more advanced in pronouncing. According to

the TP3, “the 2nd speaker might have been a bit shy, seemed to read with a not fully open mouth. [...] no pauses between the single words.” TP1 writes that “apart from the fact that she (the 2nd speaker) has a stronger Finnish accent, she is less fluent. This means that I cannot get the meaning of the words that I cannot understand so easily from the context, since I have to wait longer for the input”.

Questions 2 and 3 in the second part of the question sheet were about the different sounds. The test persons were asked to *listen carefully to the /p/, /t/, /k/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds and figure out the differences between the readers’ pronunciation of these sounds. How does this difference affect the intelligibility?* This question seemed to be very hard. Maybe it would have been clearer for the test persons if I had mentioned the idea of listening to the aspirations in /t/, /p/ and /k/ sounds and the different versions of pronouncing the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. However, TP3 was thinking in the right direction. She wrote that “speaker 2 indicates the /t/ more than the speaker 1, it sounds harder than when the speaker 1 uses it.” She noticed more stress on /t/ sounds made by the speaker 2. She also argues that “speaker 1 pronounces the /p/ more than speaker 2. By speaker 2 it sounds more like a soft /p/, more a /b/”. About the /k/ sound, the TP3 writes that “speaker 1 uses a hard /k/, speaker 2 more a soft /k/, almost a /g/”. Again, it is a matter of aspiration and may affect the intelligibility. The fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ seemed to be harder to analyse. TP3 writes that “they both use the dental sounds; it sounds softer with the speaker 1. With speaker 2, it sounds a bit more like /d/”. TP1 writes that “as a native speaker of Spanish, I cannot distinguish between the sounds /ð/ and /d/”. The French TP2 did not hear any differences in any of these sounds. All in all, there seems to be big cultural and native language differences in the understanding and hearing of these sounds.

In the last two questions of the question sheet, the test persons were asked to write down *the pronunciation features that they find difficult and easy to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English*. Again, TP1 compares the Finnish non-native speakers of English with Spaniards and finds Finns fairly easy to understand. The only thing she mentions is that she cannot make a difference between the long and short vowels made by Finnish speakers and loses her attention if Finns do not use any intonation or word stress, what seems to be a quite typical thing for the Finnish non-native speakers of English. The main fact which caught the ear in TP2 and TP3's answers is the fact that Finns tend to pronounce the words as they are written, and they pronounce almost every letter in a word, i.e. as they see them. The idea of restoring the words in their written form was already stated by Lintunen (see chapter 2.2). TP3 wrote that Finns also tend to have "a pretty hard /r/ when they speak because they use it their language". TP3 thinks it is easier for her (as a French non-native speaker of English) to understand other non-native speakers of English rather than native speakers of English with a strong British accent. She also writes that "even if we have different accents, it's as if we were 'adapting' our English". "We use the same level of language, same vocabulary, which makes a universal language (we avoid particularities, play on words, and difficult sentences)", she continues.

5.3 Results compared to LFC

Although Jenkins (2007) did not do any research on Finnish non-native speakers of English, the most crucial mistakes, according the mutual intelligibility, can be seen in the use of English of the Finnish non-native speakers, too. The L1 influenced pronunciation features that caused problems, were more or less the same as in Jenkins' LFC (see chapter 3.3) results. As Jenkins states in her LFC (table 3, chapter 3.3), some substitutions for the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds are acceptable, in this research TP3

heard them as dental /t/ or /d/ and it did not affect the intelligibility. According to the LFC's position regarding the substitutions of the fricative /θ/ and /ð/, the majority of L2 speakers of English find them far easier to produce and they are not necessary for the intelligible ELF pronunciation (Jenkins 2000, 138).

However, the needed aspiration after the sound /p/, /t/ and /k/ is crucial, in terms of mutual intelligibility, when they occur in initial position in a stressed syllable. "Without the help of this puff of air, a listener will find it more difficult to identify the sound as voiceless" (Jenkins, 2000, 138). Otherwise, "these stops sound like their voiced counterparts /b/, /d/ and /g/" (Jenkins, 2002, 96), as was stated in TP3's answer (see chapter 5.2). There, the meaning of words can be mixed.

In order to develop speakers' ability to adjust their pronunciation according to the communication situation, a lot of communication practice, among the LFC, is needed. At the moment, the models for pronunciations in the Finnish English classroom come from recorded tapes which have been spoken by native speakers of English. The use of other NNS models is needed. As Kachru puts it "the more varieties one is exposed to, the more one learns how to accommodate the differences in accent, lexicogrammar, and discursal strategies. [...] The resources of Internet and cable news are examples of two channels through which one can get exposure to almost all varieties of English." (2005, 164).

5.4 Results compared to Finnish EFL teaching

Despite the fact that the Finnish National Curriculum seems only to take a very superficial positioning towards the teaching of pronunciation in the Finnish ELT classroom, the idea of English as a global language, at least to some extent, should be brought into pronunciation teaching in more detail. The lack of knowledge of the

issues in ELF among Finnish English teachers may be one of the reasons for this. Jenkins' (2002) model of an accommodated pronunciation may be a helpful relief to learners who have difficulties in producing English phonemes. The phonological and phonetic features in the LFC seem to be crucial "as safeguards of mutual intelligibility" (Jenkins, 2002, 96) in the communication between non-native speakers of English. "Concentrating on these items is likely to be more effective than attending to every detail in which an NNS's pronunciation differs from that one of the (standard) pronunciation of an NS" (Jenkins, 2002, 96). Additionally, it is far more relevant, since the syllabus should no longer try to attempt to address the comprehension needs of a native speaker of English listener, as it was already noted, the listener is more likely to be a non-native speaker of English. (Jenkins, 2002, 96.) It seems that teaching English pronunciation in Finland needs to be developed, perhaps by allowing simplifications.

As stated before, native speakers of Finnish are not accustomed to making a clear distinction between the written and the spoken forms of words. This factor also leads to pronunciation errors. As Lintunen (2004, 227) states, pronunciation should be taught to the pupils explicitly. "Teachers should not trust that good language learners are automatically able to pick up accurate pronunciation through listening. [...] Listening skills need to be practised as well and understanding several accents is vitally important" (Lintunen, 2004, 227). The results of Lintunen's study showed that phonemic transcription might be a powerful method of teaching pronunciation. At least starting to pay attention to the pronunciations presented in schoolbooks and teaching language learners how to read and interpret these transcriptions is very important, and, unfortunately, this information, included in most teaching materials, seems to be used inefficiently. Of course, from the point of view of ELF, the adjusting of one's teaching should be necessary. Through the ideas of Lintunen (2004) by

enhancing the use of phonetic transcriptions in the English lesson, regarding the ELF, could be one way of bringing in the crucial pronunciation features.

According to the test results in this study, the foreign listeners in the listening test find it hard to understand when a Finnish speaker of English tries to pronounce all the letters in a word. As far as the plosive /p/, /t/ and /k/ sounds in initial position are concerned, the teaching of aspiration with these sounds is very important. Lintunen (2004, 77) states in his study that the lack of aspiration is a common problem of the Finnish English learners at the lower levels of learning. Whereas, according to Jenkins' LFC, the accurate pronunciation of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ sounds does not have a crucial effect on mutual intelligibility. Although, according to Lintunen (2004, 77-78), it is factual that the dental fricatives are among the most difficult consonants of English for the Finnish English learners, and "it has been frequently observed that Finnish speakers tend to replace these sounds with the plosives /t, d/ due to the negative transfer [...] Thus the manner and often also the place of articulation are incorrect" (2004, 77-78). He also writes that Finns may also confuse the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with /f/ and /v/ and these sounds are mostly a problem in the early stages of EFL teaching. This, again, lies more in the field of accuracy, rather than mutual intelligibility. "Despite much classroom time expended on the RP/GA forms, few learners ultimately acquire them" (Jenkins 2000, 138). Therefore, the drilling of the correct /θ/ and /ð/ sounds in the Finnish English classroom can be seen less important.

The great variation in the English language is a challenge to English language teaching, especially to pronunciation teaching. The world Englishes differ from each other on the level of phonology and phonetics. As in Finland, it is common that a single Inner Circle variety is chosen as a model for pronunciation. As stated before, in

Finland the RP is the chosen variety as model in EFL teaching. However, Finnish learners are more likely to communicate in English with other EFL learners or speakers of other Expanding Circle varieties than with the speakers of RP.

Learners should set the goals themselves, and estimate the context in which they are going to use English in the future. Learners need specific training to enable to add to their phonological repertoires those features which are most important for intelligible pronunciation in the ELF contexts. “In addition, they need pedagogic help in order to develop their accommodation skills, so that they become more aware of the importance of making adjustments for specific interlocutors and more able to identify the occasions when this is necessary” (Jenkins, 2002, 96).

The challenge is also visible for the teacher training departments of the Universities. “Almost no teacher training program in the Inner Circle at this point has a component of making trainees aware of world varieties of English” (Kachru, 2005, 164-165). I assume, this is the case in the Expanding Circle countries, too. Awareness of differences can resolve the issues of prejudices and resistance to variety in the Finnish field of English teaching. But in the end, is this not all about using English for effective communication across varieties?

6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was, firstly, to discuss the major differences in the English and Finnish phonological systems. Secondly, the aim was to discuss the notion of English as a lingua franca and its requirements in the successful communication between non-native speakers of English. Thirdly, the aim was to underline some differences in pronunciation made by the Finnish EFL learners in terms of mutual intelligibility with other non-native speakers of English and discuss these differences from the point of view of LFC and Finnish EFL teaching.

One can argue that the Finnish Curriculum for English and the teaching of EFL need to be thought through regarding the LFC. The pronunciation differences made by the Finnish English learners in the pronunciation test and the problems of understanding their speech by other non-native speakers in the listening test seem to follow the same problematic issues stated by Jennifer Jenkins in her study. Therefore, it needs to be clear whether English is taught as a second, foreign or an international language and then the model for pronunciation should be chosen accordingly. There is the possibility of simplifying English pronunciation, if it were studied for the purpose of interaction within the Outer and Expanding Circles. The professionals in the field of teaching EFL are now facing the responsibility to equip the learners of English to meet the challenge of globalization.

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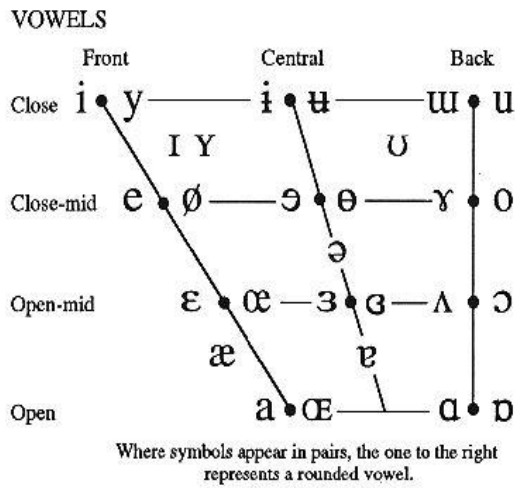
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Source 5: The CEFL in Finnish

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Appendices

Appendix 1:



Picture 1: the IPA chart for vowels

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 1993)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

Picture 2: The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for consonants

Appendix 2:

The national English test (englannin valtakunnallinen koe), spring 2008

Speaking activity:

“Read the text loud. Pay attention to the pronunciation of the words. Before reading, take a few minutes and read through and study the text silently. “

Text A:

Handshaking is a good example when talking about differences in culture between your own country and a foreign one. In many European countries people shake hands every time they meet as well when they part. In the Nordic countries the customs are nowadays quite casual. In many countries, such as France and Germany, it is customary not to use a person's first name unless you are told to do so. Usually people use a person's title or family name when addressing to one another, even if they have known each other for ages.

Text B:

The use of eye contact between people in different cultures varies a lot. In countries where people stand close to one another when they talk, there's also more eye contact. But like in Finland, for example, people tend to stand a bit further away. Unfortunately, many foreigners have noticed that Finnish people do not make eye contact and may interpret that as being very rude. However, there are countries where there's even less eye contact, for instance Japan and China. In those countries it is considered very rude to look a person straight in the eye.

Text D:

In many countries when you go and visit people, you dress up to show respect to your host. It is always better to be on the safe side – to dress up – rather than end up being embarrassed. In some cultures, like Japan for example, people expect you to take off your shoes before entering their house, so make sure you're wearing clean socks without holes. However, in some other cultures your host would feel ridiculous if you took your shoes off. Again, important to remember: when in Rome, do as the Romans do!

Appendix 3:

The question sheet for the listening test.

University of Tampere

male / female

Essi Parikka 68627

Nationality: _____

Question sheet

Part I

1) Listen to the extracts and transcribe what you hear using the phonetic alphabet:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

2) Based on what you heard, were there any parts which you didn't understand? Why?

3) If yes to B), were these parts words or whole sentences?

4) Did you understand the main idea? How?

Part II

Comparison:

1. Compare the two extracts you hear. What are the main differences? How do these differences affect the intelligibility?

2. Now listen carefully to the /t/ and /p/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

3. Now listen carefully to the /k/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

Part III

1. Are there any pronunciation features that you find difficult to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

2. On the other hand, are there any pronunciation features that you find easy to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

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APPENDIX 4

male / female

Nationality: Spanish

Question sheet

Part I

1) Listen to the extracts and transcribe what you hear using the phonetic alphabet:

- A. In some kultures lack ~~Japan~~ for example ppl expect you to
talk of p: suis bifo: entarin ~~der~~ haus
- B. It rules of the kontakt btwn ppl in diferent kultures
varies a lot in kountries were ppl stand ~~the~~
klds to wn another Jan [-] ~~der~~ z also mer es kontakt
- C. In the no: ~~der~~ kountries der kustom most a: norders kuzi kauseum
- D. It is kuld kustom^t not to used at persons f:ist [-]
unles you: ~~ar~~ told to du: sar

2) Based on what you heard, were there any parts which you didn't understand? Why?

I found some difficulties in understanding C and D extracts
because the pronunciation was very different from the standard
and she spoke quite slowly

3) If yes to ² B), were these parts words or whole sentences?

They were only words, although at the beginning I couldn't
understand the whole sentences in C and D. However, this
fact was overcome when listening to the extracts twice.

4) Did you understand the main idea? How?

I understood the main idea because of the context. Maybe
it helped me that I knew they were talking about different
cultures. Also, their pronunciation was similar to that of
Spaniards when they are learning English, that is, we tend
to pronounce things as they would be in Spanish, and I find
it is quite similar to what these students are doing.

P XIQUISTA

Part II

Comparison:

1. Compare the two extracts you hear. What are the main differences? How do these differences affect the intelligibility?

In the first extract, the speaker is more fluent and her pronunciation is closer to standard English. These ~~helps~~ facts help to understand the extract easily. In the second extract, apart from the fact that she has a stronger Finnish accent, she is less fluent. This means that I cannot get the meaning of the words that I cannot understand so easily from the context, since I have to wait longer for the input.

2. Now listen carefully to the /t/ and /p/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

I think that both readers distinguish between /t/ and /p/ sounds, but it is again reader A (the first one) the one ~~the~~ who does it clearly.

3. Now listen carefully to the /k/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

As a native speaker of Spanish I cannot distinguish between the sounds /θ/ and /ð/. In the first extract I cannot find any difference between /k/ pronunciations. However, in the second case I found a difference in pronunciation in words such as 'country' and 'custom', may be due to the type of vowel that follows this sound!

Part III

1. Are there any pronunciation features that you find difficult to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

I cannot think of a special feature that makes it difficult to understand Finns when they speak English. I think they use some of the sounds Spaniards use when we speak English. The only thing that makes it sometimes hard for me is the tone or intonation. Sometimes it is flat (with no ups and downs) and it makes that I lose attention.

2. On the other hand, are there any pronunciation features that you find easy to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

As I already ~~to~~ noted down above, I cannot distinguish between some of the sounds that are used in English (e.g. difference between long and short vowels), so I mainly get the meaning or main idea from the context. So I think that your pronunciation features are not very far from mine and I can understand Finns quite well.

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male / female

Nationality: French

Question sheet

Part I

1) Listen to the extracts and transcribe what you hear using the phonetic alphabet:

- A. in some cultures for example, like Japan, people expect you to take off your shoes before entering their house so make so sure you're socks without holes
- B. the use of the eye contact between people in different cultures varies in a lot of countries where people stand close to one other when they eye contact
- C. in nordic countries, most are no day school
- D. it is not persons first unless you are told who's who
ystävän??

2) Based on what you heard, were there any parts which you didn't understand? Why?

In extracts C & D, I didn't understand the main idea because the words I understood (or think I've heard!) are not sufficient to try to guess the whole sentence. The pronunciation was not clear enough for me. For A & B, it's almost ok!

3) If yes to 2), were these parts words or whole sentences?

For extracts A & B, "words" but even if I didn't get those words, I could try to guess or to imagine what could fit in this context.
For extracts C & D, since I didn't get the main words, it's impossible for me to guess ... so I didn't understand "whole sentences".

4) Did you understand the main idea? How?

In A & B, yes because I heard the most important words of the sentence so even if I miss one or two, it's (almost!) clear.
But for C & D, I have no idea about the topic! (in C it's something dealing with Nordic countries, for D, no idea at all.
Sorry :)

Part II

Comparison:

1. Compare the two extracts you hear. What are the main differences? How do these differences affect the intelligibility?

I think I understand the 1st extract better than the 2nd one. In the 1st one, it's difficult for me to get some words like "Europe", "Germany". In the 2nd one, I didn't get "France" for example. I think the 1st one is clearer for me because the pronunciation is closer to the kind of "accent" I can hear around me or on T.V, it seems to be more... fluent whereas in the 2nd extract, the speaker hesitates more... it's... how to say ... "out".

2. Now listen carefully to the /t/ and /p/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

I don't hear a big difference for /t/ & /p/ sounds.

3. Now listen carefully to the /k/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

I think I understand better when /θ/ and /ð/ are pronounced.

Part III

1. Are there any pronunciation features that you find difficult to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

Actually, it depends on the "accent" because I've met Finns who were speaking a very clear and fluent English, almost with no "Finnish accent", I understand them. But I also met Finns who pronounced almost all the letters and it was hard for me to get even easy words.

2. On the other hand, are there any pronunciation features that you find easy to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

As a French non-native speaker of English, I think it's easier for me to understand non-native speakers! Because even if we have different accents, it's as if we were "adapting" our English. ~~we~~ On the contrary, it's sometimes hard for me to understand a native speaker with a strong British accent! So basically, I understand better foreigners speaking English than English or Irish people. I think it's because between foreigners, we use the same level of language, same vocabulary... which makes a universal language (we avoid particularities, play on words, difficult sentences).

University of Tampere
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male / female

Nationality: GERMANY

Question sheet

Part I

1) Listen to the extracts and transcribe what you hear using the phonetic alphabet:

- A. Is so good to rest? Japan
for example, people expect you to take of your shoes
before entering your house. So make sure you are wearing clean socks
 B. The use of eye contact between people in different cultures
wives are not in countries where people usually close to one
other and they talk ~~with~~ ~~without~~ eye contact
 C. in the nordic countries they
most are long days ~~times~~ [karuzə]
 D. It is not to use persons, first unless
you are told to

2) Based on what you heard, were there any parts which you didn't understand? Why?

Especially C. & D. were hard to follow, since the speaker spoke ~~not~~ loud
enough. Also the sentences ~~were~~ ^{The speaker seemed to} ~~were~~ stotter a bit. Furthermore the pronunciation
of all 4 examples was different, hard to follow. I could figure out a few
words, where I knew what they were supposed to mean. But they might
be kind of hard to understand for other people from foreign countries.

3) If yes to B), were these parts words or whole sentences? Sometimes there was no stress on words.

I think they were supposed to be sentences but sounded like
phrases to me, i.e. a couple of words in a row, a phrase which I
did not understand and after that again some words.

4) Did you understand the main idea? How?

Yes, I did. I could figure out single words, although they were not
pronounced correctly. e.g. 'without wholes' I did not understand easily,
but could think of that since the speaker was talking about socks.
But I couldn't figure out the context of examples C. & D., because
of the way the speaker talked.

Part II

Comparison:

1. Compare the two extracts you hear. What are the main differences? How do these differences affect the intelligibility?

Speaker 1 is more advanced than Speaker 2. There was quite a good pronunciation and stress of words when Sp1 read. It sounded more confident. Speaker 2 might have been a little shy, seemed to read with a not fully open mouth. Words didn't sound very clear, no pauses between the single words. That's why it was harder to follow Speaker 2.

2. Now listen carefully to the /t/ and /p/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

Speaker 2 indicates /t/ more than speaker 1, it sounds harder than when Sp1 uses it. Seems the stress is on every /t/. ^{Sp1} ~~Sp1~~ pronounces the /p/ more than Sp2. By Sp2 it sounds more like a soft /p/, more a /b/. Speaker 1 sounds more fluently than Speaker 2.

3. Now listen carefully to the /k/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. What is the difference between the readers' pronunciation of these sounds? How does this difference affect the intelligibility?

~~Sp1~~ speaker 1 use a hard /k/, Sp2 more a soft /k/, almost a /g/. They both use the dental sounds, it sounds more softer with Speaker 1. With speaker 2 it sounds a bit more like a /d/.

Part III

1. Are there any pronunciation features that you find difficult to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

Some of them focus on plurals, so they stress it (like Sp2 from Part II). They also read the words sometimes like they see them, which is like that in the Finnish language therefore the pronunciation doesn't sound like the English one, as it is supposed to sound. Some people feel a bit ashamed, if they can't speak English very well.

2. On the other hand, are there any pronunciation features that you find easy to understand when listening to a Finnish non-native speaker of English? What are these features?

It depends on the different people ^{who} ~~they~~ talk. Sp1 from Part II spoke / read Sp2 rather slow & concentrated on the text to read. Finns have sometimes a pretty hard /r/ when they speak, because they use it in their languages, but it easy to understand.