Russian-speaking examinees' oral proficiency in Finnish in the light of background factors
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The study examines Russian-speaking examinees' (n=8412) oral proficiency in Finnish and changes in proficiency between 2012–2021 using the register data from a national high-stakes language test (National Certificate of Language Proficiency). According to the register data, Russian-speaking examinees' oral proficiency has declined over the years. In this article, we discuss possible explanations for the decline in relation to the background factors of the examinees.

The results show that the decline in oral proficiency was linked with the background factors. Male speakers were slightly weaker than female speakers, and older speakers weaker than younger ones. In addition, the age of the Finnish learner, their level of education and their length of time spent studying Finnish also played a role in their speaking ability. A high(er) level of education, young age and at least four years of Finnish language studies were associated with good speaking skills. The environment and frequency of language use also had a positive effect on oral proficiency: in particular, using the language in everyday interactions was significant for oral proficiency. Employment was correlated with good oral proficiency (level 4~B2), but unemployed people and students also tended to achieve a better-than-expected level 3 (B1).