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English Pronunciation in Suprasegmental Features among Seventh Grade EFL Students at SMPN 4 Banyuwangi

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A B S T R A C T

Common problems faced by students in pronunciation include misplaced word stress, unnatural intonation patterns, and incorrect rhythm. This research aims to analyse the suprasegmental features of English pronunciation among seventh-grade EFL students at SMPN 4 Banyuwangi. The scope of the study is limited to suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, specifically word stress, intonation, and rhythm. The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative research design, involving 31 respondents selected through total sampling. The instrument used in this research was a pronunciation test consisting of six sentences that were required to read aloud by the respondents. The result showed that the students' average pronunciation score was 64% (categorized as "fair"). It means that the students had a sufficient ability in producing English suprasegmental features, although they still experienced difficulties in applying appropriate word stress, intonation, and rhythm consistently. Therefore, more attention to teaching word stress, intonation, and rhythm is needed to improve students' pronunciation.

Keywords: *English Pronunciation, Suprasegmental Features, Word Stress, Intonation, Rhythm*
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INTRODUCTION

English has become an essential global language used for international communication, education, technology, and business. As a compulsory subject in Indonesia, mastering English is crucial for students to access global knowledge and opportunities (Mulis & Blouin, 2024). One of the major skills in English learning is speaking, which requires not only vocabulary and grammar, but also accurate pronunciation to support clear and effective communication (Santrika & Damanik, 2025). Pronunciation is a vital component of speaking skills. It affects both the speaker's clarity and the listener's comprehension. Students with poor pronunciation may be misunderstood even when their grammar and vocabulary are correct (Riahilary et al., 2016). Pronunciation is one of the most vital components in English speaking skills. It directly influences how a speaker is understood by others, especially in real communication. In the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL), pronunciation refers to the way in which words and sounds are spoken. Harmer (2007) stated that pronunciation involves the production and perception of sounds, including how sounds are organized, stressed, and connected in speech (Pasha, 2025). Good pronunciation supports the clarity of spoken messages, while poor pronunciation can cause misunderstanding, even if grammar and vocabulary are accurate. Therefore, pronunciation is one of the key aspects in learning to speak English fluently and naturally.

In addition, pronunciation supports listening comprehension, as learners become more aware of how English sounds are formed and used in real communication. To understand English pronunciation more deeply, it is important to analyse its phonological components. Pronunciation is generally divided into two main categories, those are segmental and suprasegmental (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Segmental aspects refer to the individual speech sounds of vowels, pure vowels and diphthongs, and consonant, while suprasegmental

features include stress, intonation, rhythm, and pitch. Segmental features refer to the individual sounds of the language, including vowels, diphthongs, and consonants, which serve as the basic building blocks of spoken words. Segmental accuracy helps with word clarity, while suprasegmental mastery is crucial for conveying meaning, emotion, and communicative intent (Sharma, 2021). Learners who struggle with either aspect may produce speech that is unnatural, monotonous, or unclear. Suprasegmental features refer to broader elements in pronunciation, including word stress, intonation, and rhythm.

Word stress is the emphasis placed on a specific syllable within a word. In English, word stress plays a crucial role in distinguishing meaning, maintaining rhythm, and ensuring natural pronunciation. Hodgetts (2020) said that this problem is common among Indonesian learners, whose first language is syllable-timed, making it difficult to adapt to the stress-timed rhythm of English (Santrika & Damanik, 2025).Unlike *Bahasa*, where stress is often fixed or less prominent, English has a variable stress system, meaning that the location of stress within a word can change its identity or function. For example, the difference of word *ˈrecord* (noun) and *reˈcord* (verb) is only in the placement of stress. In phonetic transcription, word stress is represented by a stress mark placed before the stressed syllable. The primary stress is marked with a high vertical line (ˈ) before the stressed syllable, while the secondary stress is marked with a low vertical line (ˌ) before the syllable.

For example:

ˈrecord (noun) → /ˈrekɔːd/
reˈcord (verb) → /rɪˈkɔːd/

This notation shows which syllable receives greater emphasis in pronunciation. Word stress has been widely reported as a major pronunciation difficulty among EFL learners (Krisdianata & Bram, 2022; Rohmi et al., 2026). Misplacing stress may make a word difficult to recognize or even change its meaning entirely. In spoken discourse, improper stress can reduce the listener's comprehension and make the speaker sound less fluent or natural. Therefore, teaching learners to identify and produce correct word stress is essential for effective communication. Word stress affects not just individual word recognition but also the flow of connected speech (Yang, 2025). In English, stressed syllables tend to be longer, louder, and said with a higher pitch than unstressed syllables. If students stress the wrong part of a word, it may disrupt the expected rhythm and lead to communication breakdown. For this reason, word stress should be taught early and reinforced regularly in the classroom. English stress patterns are often unpredictable and must be learned through exposure and practice. While there are general rules such as stressing the first syllable in most two-syllable nouns many exceptions exist. Therefore, learners must develop an awareness of stress patterns through consistent listening and repetition. In this research, students' ability to use correct word stress will be assessed by examining their spoken performance when reading aloud. The focus will be on whether they place the stress on the appropriate syllable in polysyllabic words, and whether their stress patterns contribute to clear and intelligible speech. Mastery of word stress is a foundational step toward achieving fluent and natural English pronunciation.

Intonation refers to the variation of pitch during speech. It is the way the voice rises and falls when speaking and is used to express meaning beyond the words themselves. Intonation plays an important role in showing the speaker's attitude, emotion, and the type of sentence being spoken. Unlike word stress, which focuses on syllables within a word, intonation operates at the sentence level and contributes to the natural flow and expressiveness of speech. In phonetic and prosodic studies, intonation is represented visually through contours or pitch movement lines, which show how the speaker's voice rises and falls across an utterance. These intonation contours are often symbolized using arrows such as rising (↗), falling (↘), or falling–rising (↘↗) patterns. The shapes of these contours look like wave or frequency curves, showing how the pitch moves up and down in spoken sentences (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

For example:

Falling intonation (↘) is used in statements or Wh-questions.
→ She is coming home ↘

Rising intonation (↗) is used in yes-no questions.
→ Are you ready ↗?
Falling–rising intonation (↘↗) may show uncertainty, hesitation, or continuation.
→ Well ↘↗maybe tomorrow.

This visual representation helps learners understand that intonation is not random but follows predictable pitch movement patterns that carry meaning and emotion in communication. Intonation also functions as a signal of grammatical structure and communicative intent. It can indicate whether an utterance is a statement, question, command, or expression of emotion. Correct intonation helps listeners recognize the speaker's intention even when the words are similar. For example, the same words can sound like a question or a statement depending on the pitch movement:

You're coming ↗? (question)
You're coming ↘. (statement)

In addition, intonation contributes to the natural rhythm and intelligibility of speech. Most of EFL students also struggled with intonation and word stress, which made their speech sound monotonous and less natural (Santrika & Damanik, 2025). A flat or monotonous tone may make the speaker sound bored or unclear, while an appropriate pitch range makes communication more engaging and meaningful.

Rhythm refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in speech. It is the regular beat or timing that gives spoken language its flow and natural pace. In English, rhythm is essential for intelligibility and fluency because it helps listeners predict and process speech more easily. English is known as a stress-timed language, meaning that the time between stressed syllables tends to remain roughly equal, regardless of how many unstressed syllables occur between them (Khaleghi et al., 2020). In phonetic and prosodic studies, rhythm can be represented visually through wave-like timing patterns, where peaks represent stressed syllables and valleys represent unstressed syllables. These rhythmic patterns resemble sound frequency waves, showing how speech alternates between strong and weak beats. This visual representation helps learners see that English rhythm is not syllable-by-syllable, but rather organized around stress timing (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

For example:

Sentence: I want to go to the market.
Rhythmic pattern: I WANT | to GO | to the MARket

In this example, the stressed syllables (*WANT, GO, MAR-*) occur at nearly regular intervals, while the unstressed syllables (*I, to, the, -ket*) are shortened to maintain the rhythm. Mastering English rhythm requires learners to focus on both timing and reduction. Unstressed syllables are often shortened, and vowels may be reduced to /ə/ (the schwa sound) to preserve the natural rhythm of speech. This process is called vowel reduction, and it is one of the key characteristics of fluent English pronunciation. Moreover, rhythm contributes to the overall prosody of speech. The combination of stress, intonation, and timing that conveys meaning, emotion, and coherence. Without proper rhythm, speech may sound unnatural, too slow, or difficult to follow. Teaching students to use correct rhythm patterns therefore plays an important role in improving their communicative competence and listening comprehension.

These features are essential for making speech sound natural, expressive, and meaningful. According to Zemková (2018), suprasegmental features distinguish human speech from the artificial speech of machines (Laila & Leliana, 2022). This is because suprasegmental features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm carry contextual and emotional information that contributes to naturalness and speaker intention in spoken communication, which are often difficult to fully replicate in machine-generated speech. Suprasegmental features shape the melody and flow of spoken language (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Without proper use of suprasegmental aspects, even grammatically correct sentences may sound robotic or confusing. For instance, incorrect word stress can lead to confusion between nouns and verbs, such as "record" (noun) and "record" (verb). Likewise, incorrect intonation can make questions sound like statements, or make the speaker seem uninterested or impolite.

Therefore, suprasegmental features must be given attention in pronunciation practice. These features include word stress, intonation, and rhythm, which influence how meaning is expressed and understood in communication. Correct word stress helps listeners recognize words accurately, while appropriate intonation shows emotions, attitudes, and sentence purposes such as questions or statements. Rhythm also makes speech sound more fluent and natural. Without good suprasegmental control, learners may pronounce words correctly at the segmental level but still be difficult to understand. Therefore, suprasegmental features are important in EFL learning because they help learners improve pronunciation accuracy, speak English more clearly, fluency, naturally, and overall communicative competence in English (Suciati & Diyanti, 2021).

In Indonesian educational context, the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in junior high schools emphasizes the importance of oral communication. For seventh-grade students, one of the competencies that must be achieved is the ability to pronounce English words correctly, use appropriate stress and intonation, and express ideas clearly in simple spoken interactions. However, many students still encounter difficulties in mastering these aspects due to various factors. In practice, there is often a gap between the curriculum's expectations and the realities of classroom instruction. Teachers may focus more on reading and grammar due to time constraints or testing pressure, leaving speaking and pronunciation underemphasized. Moreover, teaching pronunciation requires specific strategies and knowledge that not all teachers feel confident in using it (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Without structured pronunciation practice and feedback, students may develop fossilized errors that are hard to correct later. The common problems faced by students are misplaced word stress, unnatural intonation patterns, and incorrect rhythm. Students may feel anxious or hesitant to speak, fearing they will make pronunciation mistakes in front of others. These challenges reflect a need for deeper analysis to identify which pronunciation aspects especially suprasegmental features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm are most problematic for students. Previous studies have shown that suprasegmental features are often overlooked in pronunciation instruction, yet they are essential for natural and intelligible speech. For example, Gilakjani (2016) emphasized that students who are aware of intonation and stress patterns tend to communicate more clearly and fluently. Some previous researches found that many Indonesian students showed low mastery in using correct stress and intonation, which affected their comprehensibility.

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, including junior high schools, pronunciation often receives less focus compared to other language skills such as reading or writing. Teachers may only emphasize segmental aspects like consonants and vowels, without integrating suprasegmental features in their instruction. As a result, students may pronounce words correctly but still sound unnatural in speaking. Students' pronunciation difficulties can differ across classes and regions in Indonesia. According to Latha and Ramesh (2012), the difference problems face by the students may be influenced by several factors, such as mother tongue interference, lack of exposure to English, limited speaking practice, and inappropriate teaching methods (Dansieh, 2018). Mother tongue interference occurs when students transfer pronunciation patterns from their first language into English. The interference of their first language affects their ability to produce unfamiliar sounds in the target language, often leading to persistent pronunciation errors that hinder effective communication (Panjaitan et al., 2023). In Indonesian context, learners frequently experience shifts in vowels and consonants when pronouncing English words due to their native language influence. Since Indonesian local languages and English have different stress, intonation, and rhythm patterns, students may produce English pronunciation influenced by their native language habits. In addition, limited exposure to English can reduce students' familiarity with natural pronunciation because they rarely hear authentic English spoken by native or fluent speakers. Students who have limited speaking practice may also experience difficulties in developing accurate pronunciation, as pronunciation skills require continuous oral practice and feedback. Furthermore, inappropriate teaching methods, especially those that focus more on grammar and vocabulary than pronunciation practice, may prevent students from improving their

suprasegmental features effectively. As a result, students may become less aware of correct stress placement, natural intonation, and English rhythmic patterns in spoken communication.

At junior high school level, especially in public schools such as SMPN 4 Banyuwangi, students often lack confidence in speaking due to pronunciation issues. Therefore, it is important to understand the nature of pronunciation as a whole, and to emphasize both segmental and suprasegmental aspects in classroom learning. Therefore, this research aims to analyse the pronunciation ability of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 4 Banyuwangi. The study focuses on identifying the students' ability in suprasegmental features (stress, intonation, and rhythm).

METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative design, which focuses on analysing and describing students' pronunciation ability based on observable data. This method aims to explore the students' pronunciation ability specifically in suprasegmental features: stress, intonation, and rhythm. In this study, students pronounced the sentences given and the researchers recorded their pronunciation. Then, the researchers analysed their accuracy and naturalness in stress, intonation, and rhythm. The subject of this research were 30 students (13 males and 17 females) of 7th grade students at SMPN 4 Banyuwangi in the academic year 2025/2026. All students are in their first semester and are taking English as a compulsory subject. This class is selected using total sampling, meaning that every student in the class is included as a respondent. The researchers chose this grade because it represent the typical language proficiency level of junior high school students who are beginning to develop their speaking skill. Their participation provides an authentic context for analysing pronunciation ability, especially in suprasegmental aspects in stress, intonation, and rhythm. In this study, the data were collected through a pronunciation test using the reading aloud technique. The test was designed to measure the students' pronunciation ability, particularly in producing suprasegmental features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm. To ensure the validity of the data, the procedure was conducted in several systematic steps. Before the test began, the researchers prepared six sentences that must be read by the students, they are two positive sentences (1. She goes to school every morning, 2. They are playing football in the field.), two negative sentences (3. I don't like drinking coffee at night., 4. He is not watching television now.), and two interrogative sentences (5. Are you coming to the classroom?, 6. Do they usually study together in the library?). The design of pronunciation test was adapted from Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), who emphasized that pronunciation teaching and testing should involve meaningful language contexts that reflect natural patterns of stress, rhythm, and intonation. The sentences were selected based on the students' proficiency level and the content of the English curriculum in the seventh grade. Each sentence was arranged to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to use correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation in different sentence forms. During the data collection process, the researchers explained the test instructions clearly to the students. Each student was asked to read the sentences aloud naturally and clearly, paying close attention to pronunciation and the suprasegmental aspects being observed.

The pronunciation test was conducted individually, meaning that each student performed the reading test one by one in front of the researchers. While each student was conducting the test, her or his voice was recorded by the researchers using an audio recorder. The use of recordings served as both evidence of the students' pronunciation and as reliable material for detailed analysis, ensuring that the scoring process was objective and accurate. After all recordings had been collected, the researchers listened to each student's voice carefully by the audio recorder and evaluated it using the scoring rubric provided. The assessment focused on the three main suprasegmental features (stress, intonation, and rhythm). The data analysis in this research is conducted descriptively and qualitatively. After collecting the data, the researchers listens carefully and scores each performance using a pronunciation assessment rubric. This rubric focuses on three suprasegmental features: word

stress, intonation, and rhythm. Each student's performance is first scored individually, and then the results are summarized to identify common strengths and weaknesses across the class. The analysis does not only focus on numerical scores but also on describing typical patterns of pronunciation errors. In this study, data reduction is done by selecting relevant excerpts from the recordings, data display is presented in tables or descriptive explanation, and conclusion drawing is made to answer the research question. The rubric is designed to evaluate students' pronunciation ability based on three suprasegmental features: word stress, intonation, and rhythm. Each of these aspects is assessed individually using a 4-point scale (4, 3, 2, and 1). After the data were collected through audio recordings of students' oral reading, the researchers analyzed the results using the rubric described above. Each student was assessed in three separate categories: word stress, intonation, and rhythm. Every aspect was scored on a 1–4 scale based on the clarity, accuracy, and naturalness of their pronunciation. The researchers listened to each recording multiple times to ensure accurate scoring. Then, the results were compiled and interpreted descriptively. Rather than using statistical formulas, the data were analysed qualitatively by identifying common pronunciation patterns, recurring errors, and notable strengths across the group. This analysis helped the researchers describe the students' overall pronunciation ability and suggest areas for improvement in suprasegmental instruction. In this study, the scoring rubric was used to assess the students' pronunciation performance in terms of suprasegmental features, which include stress, intonation, and rhythm. The rubric served as a guideline for evaluating how well the students could produce English pronunciation naturally and intelligibly during the reading aloud test. The following is detail criteria of pronunciation assessment rubric by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010):

Table 1. Pronunciation Assessment Rubric

No.	Indicator	Score	Criteria
1	Word Stress	4	Correct and consistent stress on all multisyllabic words; natural stress placement with no noticeable errors.
		3	Minor errors in stress placement, but they do not interfere with overall understanding.
		2	Frequent incorrect stress; listener may need effort to understand.
		1	Incorrect or missing stress on most words; speech is confusing or unclear due to stress errors.
2	Intonation	4	Uses appropriate rising, falling, or combined intonation patterns naturally and clearly. Sentence types are easily distinguished.
		3	Occasional intonation errors, but sentence meaning is still understandable.
		2	Limited pitch variation; some sentence types sound flat or incorrect.
		1	Monotonous or inappropriate intonation throughout; meaning often unclear.
3	Rhythm	4	Smooth and natural rhythm; appropriate pacing and grouping of stressed/unstressed syllables.
		3	Minor awkwardness in rhythm; pacing mostly appropriate.
		2	Rhythm is uneven or unnatural; speech lacks flow.
		1	Speech is halting, robotic, or overly syllable-timed; listener struggles to follow.

The rubric used in this study focuses on the three main components that shape natural English speech patterns, they are word stress, intonation, and rhythm. Those are rated on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent). Therefore, the minimum possible score for each student was 3, while the maximum possible score was 12. The scoring was based on how accurately and naturally the students applied suprasegmental features when reading the six English sentences prepared in the test. These raw scores were then converted into percentage scores to determine the students' pronunciation ability levels.

The following table is a table that commonly used in educational research to transform raw scores into percentage scores for clear interpretation. They were categorized as follows:

Table 2. Pronunciation Assessment Scale on Suprasegmental Features

Percentage Range	Category	Description
86–100%	Excellent	Very clear and natural pronunciation
76–85%	Good	Mostly correct pronunciation with minor errors
56–75%	Fair	Some noticeable pronunciation difficulties
≤55%	Poor	Difficult to understand due to many pronunciation errors

The table of pronunciation assessment scale on suprasegmental features above were adapted from Brown (2003) (Zakia, 2025). The researchers used four categories in analysing the students' pronunciation scores on suprasegmental features, they are excellent (86-100%), good (76-85%), fair (56-75%), and poor (≤55%). The results of this calculation were used to describe the students' pronunciation ability level in descriptive form. The scoring formula and interpretation categories ensured that the data processing was systematic, transparent, and aligned with standard educational evaluation procedures.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The pronunciation ability was assessed based on three suprasegmental aspects, namely word stress, intonation, and rhythm. The data were obtained from a pronunciation test in which the students were asked to read several English sentences aloud. This is the result of pronunciation scores of the 31 respondents in the research. The following chart shows the students'suprasegmetal score (word stress, intonation and rhythm). The table 3 presents the percentage of students' performance in producing correct word stress. The findings show that 65.32% of the students produced word stress correctly, while 34.68% still made errors in stressing English words. This indicates that most students were able to recognize and apply word stress appropriately, although a considerable number of students continued to experience difficulties.

Table 3. Table of Word Stress Percentage

Category	Correct (%)	Incorrect (%)	Possible Causes
Word Stress	65,32%	34,68%	Mother tongue interference, limited exposure

The results indicate that students generally demonstrated a moderate to good understanding of English word stress patterns. However, the percentage of incorrect pronunciation indicates that word stress remains a challenging suprasegmental feature for some learners. The difficulties may be influenced by several factors, particularly mother tongue interference and limited exposure to English pronunciation. Mother tongue interference may occur because the stress patterns in the students' first language are different from those in English. As a result, students tend to transfer the pronunciation patterns of their native language when speaking English. In addition, limited exposure to authentic English input may reduce students' familiarity with the correct stress placement in multisyllabic words. Consequently, students may pronounce words based on spelling rather than standard pronunciation patterns. Overall, the findings indicate that although students showed relatively good performance in word stress production, further pronunciation practice and increased exposure to spoken English are still needed to improve their suprasegmental competence.

Then, table 4 presents the percentage of students' performance in using correct intonation patterns. The findings reveal that 63.70% of the students were able to use intonation appropriately, while 36.30% of them still produced incorrect intonation patterns. These results indicate that the majority of students demonstrated a relatively adequate understanding of English intonation, although a significant proportion of students continued to encounter difficulties in applying appropriate pitch variation in speech.

Table 4. Table of Intonation Percentage

Category	Correct (%)	Incorrect (%)	Possible Causes
Intonation	63,70%	36,30%	limited speaking practice, and inappropriate teaching methods

The findings suggest that intonation remains one of the challenging suprasegmental features for English learners. Although more than half of the students showed correct intonation usage, the percentage of incorrect responses indicates that many students still struggle to produce natural and accurate intonation patterns in spoken English. Several factors may contribute to these difficulties. One possible cause is limited speaking practice, which may reduce students' opportunities to apply intonation patterns in real communication. Without sufficient oral practice, students may focus more on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary rather than on speech melody and pitch variation. As a result, their speech may sound flat or unnatural. Another contributing factor may be inappropriate teaching methods. If pronunciation instruction mainly emphasizes segmental features such as individual sounds rather than suprasegmental aspects like intonation, students may not receive adequate training in using pitch patterns effectively. In addition, limited classroom activities involving conversation, dialogue, or oral interaction may also affect students' intonation development. Overall, the results indicate that students still need more communicative speaking activities and effective pronunciation instruction to improve their mastery of English intonation.

Table 5 presents the percentage of students' performance in producing appropriate rhythm in spoken English. The findings indicate that 62.90% of the students were able to apply rhythm correctly, while 37.10% still demonstrated incorrect rhythm patterns. These results show that although the majority of students had a relatively adequate understanding of English rhythm, a considerable number of students continued to experience difficulties in maintaining natural speech rhythm.

Table 5. Table of Rhythm Feature Percentage

Category	Correct (%)	Incorrect (%)	Possible Causes
Rhythm	62,90%	37,10%	Students tended to pronounce words syllable-by-syllable, and there were some frequent unnatural pauses

The findings suggest that rhythm is still a challenging suprasegmental feature for many students. The percentage of incorrect responses indicates that some students had difficulty producing the stress-timed rhythm that characterizes English speech. Instead, many students tended to pronounce words syllable-by-syllable, resulting in speech that sounded less natural and less fluent. In addition, the occurrence of frequent unnatural pauses may have affected the overall rhythm of students' speech. These pauses could be caused by hesitation, lack of confidence, limited vocabulary mastery, or difficulties in organizing ideas while speaking. Consequently, students' speech rhythm became interrupted and less smooth. The results also imply that students may not be fully familiar with the natural flow and timing patterns of English pronunciation. Since rhythm plays an important role in speech intelligibility and fluency, insufficient mastery of rhythm may negatively influence effective communication. Overall, the findings indicate that students need more intensive speaking and listening practice, particularly activities focusing on stress-timed rhythm, connected speech, and speech fluency, in order to improve their mastery of English rhythm patterns. The following chart presents the overall results of students' suprasegmental scores

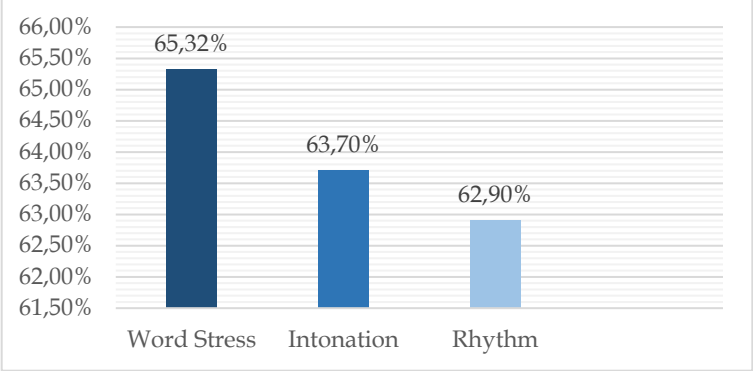

Figure 1. The Result of Students' Suprasegmental Scores

Based on the data in figure 4 above, the result showed that the average score for students performed best in word stress (65,32%), intonation (63.70%) and rhythm (62.90%). The results indicate that students performed better in word stress than in intonation and rhythm, and it means that students were more familiar with stress patterns, while they still experienced difficulties in producing natural intonation and rhythmic patterns in English speech. Intonation and rhythm obtained lower mean scores, so that these areas still require further improvement. Overall, the three aspects show relatively similar performance, although word stress appears to be more developed than the others. The following table is the recapitulation scores include students' performance in word stress, intonation, and rhythm, as well as the total score and final score.

Table 6. Recapitulation of Students' Pronunciation in Suprasegmental Features Score

No.	Student's Initial	Word Stress	Intonation	Rhythm	Total	Final Score (%)
1	MR	2	2	2	6	50
2	MFA	2	2	2	6	50
3	RMJR	2	3	2	7	58
4	RPH	3	3	2	8	67
5	ARS	3	3	2	8	67
6	FRMM	3	2	2	7	58
7	SQA	4	4	4	12	100
8	RDZ	2	2	2	6	50
9	DPA	2	3	2	7	58
10	RAP	2	2	2	6	50
11	MRFF	3	4	3	10	83
12	AAE	4	3	4	11	92
13	FCA	1	2	2	5	42
14	NNK	2	1	2	5	42
15	AWOR	2	2	3	7	58
16	MPL	3	2	1	6	50
17	ASM	4	4	4	12	100
18	TA	3	3	2	8	67
19	NRR	2	2	3	7	58
20	RIS	3	3	2	8	67
21	AOS	4	4	3	11	92
22	KAN	2	2	2	6	50
23	AANS	2	2	3	7	58
24	FAN	2	2	3	7	58
25	ARS	2	3	2	7	58
26	MM	2	2	3	7	58
27	ANS	4	3	3	10	83
28	SPL	2	2	2	6	50
29	DRL	3	3	3	9	75
30	ANPM	2	1	2	5	42
31	CAF	4	3	4	11	92
Average Score		**65.32**	**63.70**	**62.90**	**238**	**64**

Based on table 6 above, the result showed that the average score in suprasegemental features is 64% and it was categorized as "fair". It means that some noticeable pronunciation difficulties were found in the students' speech, particularly in the use of word stress, intonation, and rhythm. While some students demonstrated good control of these aspects, others still experienced difficulties in producing natural and accurate pronunciation. Some pronunciation difficulties found were incorrect placement of word stress (e.g., *to**GE**ther* pronounced as *toge**THER***), inappropriate intonation (questions sound like statements), unnatural rhythm (too flat or overly hesitant) and unclear production of certain sounds (e.g., /θ/ pronounced as /t/). In general, those points indicate that the students were able to produce word stress, intonation, and rhythm with medium level of proficiency but it is noticeable that they pronunciation difficulties were still found, particularly in producing appropriate intonation patterns and maintaining natural rhythm in English.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the students' pronunciation ability was categorized as "fair," with word stress achieving higher scores than intonation and rhythm. This finding differs from the previous study which reported that the word stress has been widely reported as a major pronunciation difficulty among EFL learners (Krisdianata & Bram, 2022; Rohmi et al., 2026). The findings of this study showed that students performed better in word stress than in intonation and rhythm, although their overall performance was still categorized as "fair." As Latha and Ramesh (2012) said that the difference problems face by the students may be influenced by several factors, such as mother tongue interference, lack of exposure to English, limited speaking practice, and inappropriate teaching methods (Dansieh, 2018). This statement supports the finding of this research, that some students demonstrate better performance in word stress compared to intonation and rhythm, whereas others may experience greater difficulties in word stress. The students' correct use of word stress could be influenced by frequent exposure to English, regular speaking practice, effective pronunciation instruction, and students' familiarity with English vocabulary and stress patterns. Then, for incorrect use of word stress could be influenced by mother tounge that can affect the way students pronounce English sounds and suprasegmental features because they tend to transfer pronunciation patterns from their first language. In addition, limited exposure to authentic English input may reduce students' familiarity with natural pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Students may also experience difficulties due to limited opportunities to practice speaking English in daily communication. Furthermore, teaching methods that do not focus enough on pronunciation practice can affect students' pronunciation improvement. Then, in terms of intonation, the results show varied performance among students. Several students were able to apply rising and falling intonation patterns appropriately, while others produced flat or monotonous intonation. Flat intonation was frequently found in declarative and interrogative sentences. Flat intonation reduced the naturalness of speech (Santrika & Damanik, 2025). Nevertheless, a few students demonstrated good to very good intonation, indicating that intonation can be improved through consistent listening and speaking practice. Many students read sentences with uneven pacing, either too fast or too slow, which affected speech fluency. Last, in terms of rhythm, the low score in rhythm indicates that students still had difficulties in producing natural English speech patterns. This finding is in line with Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), who states that speech without proper rhythm may sound unnatural, too slow, or difficult for listeners to understand.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, the findings showed that the students had a "fair" level of pronunciation ability in suprasegmental features, with word stress achieving better results than intonation and rhythm. The "fair" level indicates that the students were able to produce the suprasegmental features of pronunciation namely word stress, intonation, and rhythm with moderate accuracy. Most students demonstrated basic

awareness of word stress placement and were able to pronounce words understandably. However, their pronunciation performance was not consistent, particularly in applying appropriate intonation patterns and maintaining natural rhythm during speech. Furthermore, noticeable pronunciation difficulties were still found in students' spoken English, such as unusual strange stress patterns, flat or inappropriate intonation, and irregular rhythm. These weaknesses affected the naturalness and fluency of their pronunciation, even though the intended meaning could generally still be understood. Overall, the findings suggest that while the students have developed a foundational ability in using suprasegmental features, their pronunciation skills require further improvement, especially in terms of consistency, natural intonation, and rhythmic control. So explicit instruction and frequent practice are still needed, and while students demonstrate medium level of proficiency in pronunciation, greater emphasis should be placed on improving intonation and rhythm. Teachers need to implement appropriate strategies, provide ample practice, and utilize effective technological tools as well to help students overcome these difficulties and improve their pronunciation proficiency.

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