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Prosodic Features and English-Speaking Skills Among Second-Year Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English Students

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ABSTRACT

Effective communication in English hinges on more than just vocabulary and grammar; it is deeply influenced by prosodic features such as pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm. This study explores how these elements correlate with speaking proficiency among second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) Major in English students. Employing a predictive correlational research design, the study examined the relationships between prosodic features and key speaking competencies, including fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The results reveal that while overall prosodic features do not significantly correlate with speaking skills, pitch and intonation show positive associations with fluency and pronunciation. Specifically, pitch was linked to smoother, more dynamic speech, while intonation contributed to effective communication and expressiveness. Despite these findings, stress and rhythm were not found to have a significant impact. These results suggest that instructors should prioritize teaching pitch and intonation to enhance speaking proficiency, while further attention is needed for developing stress and rhythm skills. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating prosodic training in language curricula to foster more fluent and articulate English speakers.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English is not only a valuable skill but a necessary asset, especially for future educators. Among English language skills, speaking ability is often emphasized as it enables effective communication in both academic and professional settings. For second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students, who are training to become future teachers, mastering the nuances of spoken English is critical. However, speaking skills involve more than just vocabulary and grammar; they also rely heavily on prosodic features—such as pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm—which shape how messages are perceived and interpreted.

Prosodic features are essential for achieving clarity, conveying emotions, and engaging listeners. These elements contribute to the natural flow of speech and help speakers emphasize key points or express subtle meanings. Yet, many languages learners struggle with incorporating prosodic features, often resulting in speech that lacks the natural rhythm and expressiveness found in fluent speakers. Understanding the role of prosody in developing English speaking skills can offer valuable insights for improving communicative competence among BSED students, ensuring they are better equipped to teach and interact in English-dominated environments. This study explored the impact of prosodic features on the speaking skills of second-year BSED students, highlighting both the challenges and potential strategies for enhancing fluency and effectiveness in their spoken English.

The Communicative Language Approach (CLA) in English as a Second Language (ESL) education emphasizes the significance of interaction in language learning, facilitating essential speaking skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Vocabulary acquisition is enhanced through meaningful communication and authentic interactions, where learners engage in tasks like role-plays and discussions that promote contextual understanding (Huang et al., 2022; Prados et al., 2021).

In this approach, grammar is taught implicitly, allowing students to internalize rules naturally. Mulyani (2019) and Topal (2019) emphasized that pronunciation should be taught through interactive activities that mimic real-life conversations, focusing on intelligibility rather than perfection. This is supported by Murphy et al. (2019), who highlight the importance of real-world speaking contexts. Fluency is a primary goal of the CLA, developed through extensive speaking practice in low-stakes environments that encourage quick thinking and response, as cited in Huang et al. (2022) and Prados et al. (2021).

By integrating these elements into interactive and meaningful communication, the CLA equips learners with the tools necessary for effective language use in diverse contexts, ultimately preparing them for real-world communication challenges. Alexander Henn (2024), notes that prosodic is about how we use stress, pitch, rhythm, and intonation when we talk. It is a key to how well we communicate. These features help show emotions, sarcasm, and emphasis when we speak. Prosody also helps us express ambiguity and focus, and shows where sentences start and end. It covers things like facial expressions, volume, pauses, and speech flow, which all help us understand the speaker's feelings and intentions. It also affects accents and speech sounds, impacting how our voice sounds.

This study examined the correlation between prosodic features and English-speaking skills among second-year BSED students. It determined that existing research accurately reflected the impact of these features on English-speaking skills among students. By exploring the influence of intonation, rhythm, stress, and pitch on speaking competence, this study addressed critical gaps in current literature and offered practical insights for improving language instruction and student interactions.

Therefore, this research aimed to clarify whether prosodic elements, traditionally considered important in speaking, truly affect students' ability to communicate effectively and whether existing studies provide a comprehensive view of this relationship. The relevance of this study was evident in its potential to enhance the understanding of how prosodic features impact English-speaking skills, particularly among second-year BSED students. Through investigating how aspects such as intonation, rhythm, stress, and pitch influence English-speaking skills, the study aimed to understand if these elements significantly affected how well students could express themselves and be understood.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a predictive correlational research design to examine the relationship between prosodic features and English-speaking skills among second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) Major in English students at Opol Community College, Misamis Oriental, during the academic year 2024–2025. A total of 40 students were selected using quota sampling through the fishbowl method to ensure fairness and representation. Prior to data collection, a pilot test involving 30 third-year BSEd-English students was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the instruments.

Data were gathered using a 5-point Likert-scale evaluation covering two areas: prosodic features (pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm) and English-speaking skills (fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation). The instruments were validated by three specialists in Education and Research from Opol Community College and Opol National Secondary Technical School. Ethical procedures were strictly followed, including approval from the research adviser, completion of the ethics application form, and obtaining informed consent from participants.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used to summarize the participants' performance levels, while Pearson correlation analysis determined the relationship between prosodic features and English-speaking skills. These statistical tools provided insights into the extent to which control of prosodic elements influences students' overall speaking proficiency.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

1. What is the level of participants' mastery in prosodic features, specifically in terms of pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm?

Table 1. The Level of Participants' Mastery in Prosodic Features in terms of Pitch

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	6	15.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	34	85.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	0	0.0
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 1 focuses on participants' mastery of pitch, a crucial prosodic feature that impacts meaning and clarity in spoken language. The results revealed that 34 (85%) of the participants scored within the acceptable range (1.8–2.6) (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Brazil, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2015). This means that the majority can control pitch variations at a functional level, allowing for basic intelligibility in communication. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), pitch variation is integral to signaling emotions, indicating grammatical boundaries, and conveying the speaker's intent. For learners, achieving an acceptable level often reflects foundational competence but highlights the need for further refinement to enhance clarity and naturalness (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilbert, 2008).

Meanwhile, 6 (15%) of participants demonstrated a good mastery of pitch (2.7–3.5) (Brazil, 1997; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). This indicates a stronger command of pitch variation, which Brazil (1997) associates with increased confidence in communication. Learners who achieve a "good" level are often able to use pitch effectively to emphasize key words, signal questions or statements, and improve speech fluidity. This skill is especially important for non-native speakers, as improper pitch control can hinder listener comprehension and reduce communicative effectiveness (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilbert, 2008).

Interestingly, no participants scored in the very poor (0.0–0.8), poor (0.9–1.7), or very good (3.6–5.0) ranges (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Brazil, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2015). The absence of scores in the very low categories suggests that learners have avoided significant pitch-related issues, such as monotone delivery or inability to adjust intonation (Gilbert, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2015). However, the lack of very good scores also indicates a gap in advanced prosodic skills. This is consistent with findings by Gilbert (2008), who argues that exceptional pitch mastery requires deliberate exposure to native-like intonation patterns and consistent pronunciation practice. Learners often need guided training, such as focused listening exercises, shadowing techniques, and feedback, to progress beyond basic competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2008).

The mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.31 further contextualize these findings. The mean indicates that the average participant's mastery of pitch falls within the "good" range, reflecting an overall promising level of competence among the group (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2015). However, the relatively small standard deviation highlights limited variability in scores, suggesting that participants' mastery levels are clustered closely around the mean. This homogeneity may indicate shared instructional methods or similar levels of exposure to pitch training across the group (Brazil, 1997; Gilbert, 2008).

The results are both encouraging and indicative of specific areas requiring targeted intervention. The high percentage of participants in the acceptable range underscores a foundational competence that is likely the result of structured instructional practices. However, the lack of participants achieving very good scores suggests a plateau in skill development that may stem from insufficient exposure to advanced pitch training techniques or authentic language use. The findings suggest the potential value of integrating advanced prosodic training into English curricula. Approaches may include exposure to native speaker models, use of pitch visualization tools, and engagement in real-world communication scenarios, which could help learners improve their communicative competence.

The majority of participants (85%) demonstrated an acceptable level of pitch mastery, while a smaller group (15%) achieved a good level. No participants exhibited very poor or very good levels, suggesting that while foundational skills are present, advanced mastery remains elusive. The mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.31 indicate an overall promising level of competence with limited variability among participants. These findings align with research that emphasizes the importance of targeted practice and native-like exposure to develop higher levels of prosodic competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Brazil, 1997; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilbert, 2008).

Table 2. The Level of Participants' Mastery in Prosodic Features in terms of Stress

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	14	35.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	26	65.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	0	0.0
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 2 evaluates participants' mastery of stress, another key prosodic feature critical for rhythm, emphasis, and overall intelligibility in speech. The results showed that 26 (65%) of the participants achieved an acceptable level of mastery (1.8–2.6) (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008). This indicates that a majority of learners can apply basic stress patterns, such as correctly emphasizing content words in sentences and using word stress to distinguish between nouns and verbs (e.g., record vs. record) (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Gilbert, 2008). According to Ladefoged and Johnson (2014), proper stress application significantly impacts listener comprehension, as misplaced stress can distort meaning and reduce fluency (Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008).

In contrast, 14 (35%) of participants reached a good mastery level (2.7–3.5) (Jenkins, 2000; Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014). This reflects an improved understanding of stress-timed rhythm and the ability to emphasize key syllables naturally. Jenkins (2000) highlights that learners who master stress demonstrate improved fluency, clearer speech, and better overall communicative performance (Gilbert, 2008; Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014). Achieving a good level of stress mastery often requires learners to practice chunking speech into rhythmic units and focus on syllable timing, which enhances the natural flow of spoken language (Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008).

Notably, no participants scored in the very poor (0.0–0.8), poor (0.9–1.7), or very good (3.6–5.0) categories (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008). While the absence of very poor and poor scores suggests that learners have avoided critical weaknesses in stress application, the lack of very good scores points to a ceiling in their proficiency (Gilbert, 2008; Jenkins, 2000). As Gilbert (2008) explains, achieving native-like stress mastery requires consistent practice and specific training. Learners often benefit from activities such as mimicking stress-timed patterns in authentic speech, practicing with minimal pairs (e.g., desert vs. dessert), and receiving targeted feedback on rhythm and timing (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Gilbert, 2008; Jenkins, 2000).

The mean score of 3.27 and standard deviation of 0.35 provide additional insights into the group's performance. The mean suggests that, on average, participants are performing at the "good" level, reflecting promising competence in stress application (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008). The standard deviation indicates moderate variability in scores, implying some diversity in learners' mastery levels (Gilbert, 2008; Jenkins, 2000). This variation may reflect differences in individual exposure, practice, or instructional methods (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Jenkins, 2000).

As researchers, it is observed that these findings illustrate a positive trajectory in learners' acquisition of stress patterns, yet they highlight a gap in achieving advanced proficiency. The predominance of scores in the acceptable range signifies foundational competence, likely due to structured instruction and practice. However, the absence of very good scores underscores a need for targeted interventions to facilitate advanced mastery. Incorporating native speaker models, rhythm-based activities, and minimal pair drills into instructional programs could help learners refine their stress application further (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Gilbert, 2008; Jenkins, 2000). Additionally, tailored feedback and individual practice sessions may address the variability observed in the standard deviation.

A significant portion of participants (65%) achieved an acceptable level of stress mastery, while 35% demonstrated a good level. Similar to the findings in Table 1, no participants scored in the very poor or very good ranges, indicating moderate competence but a lack of advanced proficiency. The mean score of 3.27 and standard deviation of 0.35 highlight promising overall performance with some variability among learners. These findings underscore the importance of explicit training and repeated practice to help learners progress toward higher levels of stress mastery (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008).

Table 3. The Level of Participants' Mastery in Prosodic Features in terms of Intonation

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	1	0.25
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	30	75.0
2.7-3.5	Good	9	22.5
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100**

Table 3 presents the level of participants' mastery in prosodic features, focusing on intonation. The results revealed that the majority of participants, 30 (75%), achieved an "Acceptable" level of intonation mastery (Alexander Henn, 2024; Huang et al., 2022; Prados et al., 2021). This is followed by 9 participants (22.5%) who demonstrated a "Good" level of mastery, and 1 participant (2.5%) who fell under the "Poor" category (Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022; Mulyani, 2019; Moreno, 2024). Notably, no participants were classified as "Very Poor" or "Very Good" (Alexander Henn, 2024; Prados et al., 2021).

The predominance of participants in the "Acceptable" category suggests a moderate understanding of intonation, reflecting a baseline competence in this prosodic feature (Huang et al., 2022; Moreno, 2024). Research emphasizes that intonation is critical for conveying emotions, expressing emphasis, and ensuring clarity in spoken communication (Alexander Henn, 2024; Prados et al., 2021). However, the absence of participants at the "Very Good" level indicates a need for advanced practice to achieve mastery, as highlighted in studies emphasizing the role of interactive speaking exercises and real-world application (Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022; Mulyani, 2019).

The mean score of 3.27 and standard deviation of 0.36 provide additional insights into the group's performance (Huang et al., 2022; Moreno, 2024). The mean suggests that the average participant's intonation mastery is within the "Good" range, indicating a relatively strong level of competence across

the group (Prados et al., 2021; Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022). However, the moderate standard deviation highlights some variability in scores, reflecting differences in participants' exposure to or practice with intonation (Mulyani, 2019; Alexander Henn, 2024). This variation suggests room for tailored instructional interventions to address individual needs and bridge gaps in proficiency (Huang et al., 2022; Prados et al., 2021).

Based on the results, the findings are encouraging but indicative of specific gaps that need to be addressed. While the majority of participants exhibit a functional understanding of intonation, the lack of "Very Good" scores points to limitations in achieving advanced proficiency. To bridge this gap, we recommend implementing structured and engaging activities such as role-playing, podcasts, and simulations (Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022; Moreno, 2024). These activities can enhance real-world application and develop a more nuanced understanding of intonation. Additionally, integrating prosodic training in rhythm, stress, and pitch alongside intonation-focused exercises may promote more dynamic and effective communication (Mulyani, 2019; Huang et al., 2022).

The results show that 75% of participants achieved an "Acceptable" level of intonation mastery, while 22.5% demonstrated a "Good" level. Only 2.5% fell into the "Poor" category, with no participants scoring in the "Very Poor" or "Very Good" ranges. The mean score of 3.27 and standard deviation of 0.36 highlight a generally strong performance with some variability among learners. These findings highlight the importance of tailored strategies and meaningful practice opportunities to improve intonation skills from "Acceptable" to higher levels of mastery (Alexander Henn, 2024; Hamad & Alnuzaili, 2022; Prados et al., 2021).

Table 4. The Level of Participants' Mastery in Prosodic Features in terms of Rhythm

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	10	25.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	30	75.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	0	0.0
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 4 presents the level of participants' mastery in prosodic features, focusing on rhythm. The results showed that the majority of participants, 30 (75%), achieved an "Acceptable" level of mastery, while 10 participants (25%) reached the "Good" level. Notably, no participants were classified as "Very Poor," "Poor," or "Very Good" (Goldsmith, 1976; Leben, 2018; Nencheva et al., 2020).

The high percentage of participants in the "Acceptable" category suggests that while most have a functional understanding of rhythm in their speech, their proficiency remains at a moderate level. Rhythm is an essential prosodic feature that contributes to the natural flow and comprehensibility of speech. It helps organize spoken language by distinguishing stressed and unstressed syllables, which enhances listener engagement and comprehension (Goldsmith, 1976; Leben, 2018). However, the absence of participants in the "Very Good" category indicates a gap in achieving advanced rhythmic proficiency, possibly due to limited practice or exposure to real-life speaking opportunities (Nencheva et al., 2020; Hallam & Himonides, 2021).

The mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.34 provide further insights into participants' performance. The mean indicates that the group average falls within the "Good" range, reflecting a promising level of rhythmic mastery. However, the relatively low standard deviation suggests limited variability in scores, with most participants performing close to the average. This clustering of scores indicates that learners likely share similar levels of exposure or instructional experiences related to rhythm (Algethami & Hellmuth, 2023; Muhedeen, 2023).

Rhythm is a critical yet often under emphasized component of prosodic training, as observed in the course of the study. The results suggest that while most participants demonstrate a foundational understanding of rhythm, advanced proficiency is rare. To address this gap, we recommend incorporating educational strategies such as guided speaking exercises, music-based activities, and rhythm-focused tasks into teaching methods (Nencheva et al., 2020; Hallam & Himonides, 2021). These strategies have been shown to enhance fluency and accuracy in second language learners, providing a foundation for advanced communication skills (Algethami & Hellmuth, 2023; Muhedeen, 2023)

The results showed that 75% of participants achieved an "Acceptable" level of rhythmic mastery, while 25% demonstrated a "Good" level. No participants scored in the "Very Poor," "Poor," or "Very Good" categories. The mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.34 highlight a generally strong performance with limited variability among learners. These findings underscore the importance of integrating rhythmic awareness into language instruction through innovative teaching approaches to bridge the gap between baseline competence and advanced proficiency (Goldsmith, 1976; Leben, 2018; Nencheva et al., 2020).

1. What is the level of participants' mastery in English speaking skills in terms of: Fluency, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation?

Table 5. The Level of Participants' Mastery in English Speaking Skills in terms of Fluency

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	6	15.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	25	62.5
0.9-1.7	Poor	9	22.5
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 5 presents the level of participants' mastery in English speaking skills, specifically focusing on fluency. The results showed that the majority of participants, 25 (62.5%), achieved the "Acceptable" level of fluency. This indicates that while these participants can engage in basic conversations and express themselves clearly in everyday situations, they may still struggle with more complex speech tasks. For example, they might find it challenging to discuss abstract ideas or maintain fluency in longer, more technical conversations (Brown, 2004; Richards, 2015; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

Following this group, 9 participants (22.5%) are classified under the "Poor" level, suggesting that their fluency is limited. These participants may face difficulties with pronunciation, maintaining a consistent pace, and using appropriate vocabulary in conversations (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Burns & Seidlhofer, 2018). As a result, they may experience frequent pauses, hesitations, or struggle to form grammatically correct sentences, which can hinder their ability to communicate effectively (Gilbert, 2008; Jenkins, 2000).

Additionally, 6 participants (15%) demonstrated a "Good" level of fluency. These participants can speak confidently, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar with minimal hesitation. They are capable of engaging in more advanced conversations and expressing their ideas fluidly, showing a higher level of comfort and proficiency in English (Thornbury, 2005; Hughes, 2013; Algethami & Hellmuth, 2023). However, it is worth noting that no participants scored in the "Very Poor" (scale 1) or "Very Good" (scale 5) categories, suggesting there is room for improvement for all participants, with no extreme cases of either very high or very low fluency (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Nation, 2007).

The mean score of 2.93 and standard deviation of 0.51 further contextualize these findings. The mean indicates that, on average, participants fall within the "Acceptable" range, reflecting moderate proficiency in fluency. The relatively higher standard deviation compared to previous tables suggests more variability in fluency levels among participants, indicating that while some demonstrate confidence, others face notable challenges (Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

The prominence of participants in the "Acceptable" and "Poor" categories indicates that while many learners have reached a moderate level of fluency, a significant number still need focused support to improve their speaking abilities. One effective approach is role-playing, which allows students to practice real-life conversations and build confidence (Pitaloka et al., 2019; Harmer, 2007; Ur, 2012). Another method is the 4/3/2 technique, where students practice speaking about a topic for progressively shorter periods of time. According to Yusuf & Irawan (2022) and Nation (1991), this technique helps students think quickly and speak more fluently.

These interactive activities, such as role-playing and timed speaking exercises, are valuable for improving speaking fluency. For participants in the "Poor" category, targeted interventions are essential (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2007; Burns, 2019). Structured speaking activities, which provide more opportunities for practice in both formal and informal contexts, can help. Individualized practice, tailored to their specific needs, will also play a key role in their progress. Additionally, using short videos, as suggested by Arianti (2023) and Thornbury (2019), can expose students to different topics and vocabulary, giving them more opportunities to practice speaking. Consistent and constructive feedback will further support these learners by helping them identify areas for improvement and build confidence (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

The findings revealed a significant reliance on foundational fluency skills among participants, with noticeable gaps in advanced proficiency. This aligns with previous studies indicating the importance of continuous practice and tailored interventions (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). From a pedagogical perspective, prioritizing interactive and student-centered activities is crucial to bridging these gaps. Encouraging peer collaboration and integrating technological tools such as language apps or online discussion forums may offer innovative avenues for practice (Chapelle, 2001; Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Additionally, frequent and meaningful feedback can empower learners to self-monitor and refine their fluency.

The results showed that 62.5% of participants achieved an "Acceptable" level of fluency, 22.5% fell under the "Poor" category, and 15% reached the "Good" level. No participants were classified as "Very Poor" or "Very Good." The mean score of 2.93 suggests a moderate overall proficiency, with a standard deviation of 0.51 indicating variability in fluency levels. These findings underscore the need for focused and innovative teaching strategies to elevate learners' fluency from basic to advanced levels. By addressing individual challenges and leveraging interactive methodologies, educators can help students achieve greater fluency and confidence in their English-speaking abilities.

Table 6. The Level of Participants' Mastery in English Speaking Skills in terms of Vocabulary

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	5	12.5
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	24	60.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	11	27.5
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 6 presents the level of participants' mastery in English speaking skills in terms of vocabulary. The results show that most participants, 24 (60.0%), are at the "Acceptable" level, meaning they have a basic understanding of vocabulary and can use it for everyday conversations. They can express

simple ideas but might struggle with more complex topics. Additionally, 11 participants (27.5%) are at the "Poor" level, which suggests they have a limited vocabulary and find it challenging to express themselves clearly or accurately. Meanwhile, 5 participants (12.5%) are at the "Good" level, indicating a stronger vocabulary range and the ability to use words effectively, giving them more confidence in conversations. Notably, no participants scored in the "Very Poor" (scale 1) or "Very Good" (scale 5) categories.

The mean score of 2.89 and standard deviation of 0.50 provide deeper insights into participants' vocabulary mastery. The mean suggests that the average participant's vocabulary proficiency is near the upper end of the "Acceptable" range, reflecting moderate competence in word usage. The standard deviation indicates moderate variability in scores, with some participants performing significantly better or worse than the average, highlighting differences in exposure, practice, or instructional methods. The predominance of participants in the "Acceptable" category suggests they can manage basic conversations but need to expand their vocabulary to tackle advanced topics or articulate complex ideas. According to Colorín Colorado (2024), vocabulary development is essential for academic and linguistic success, particularly for English language learners. A strong vocabulary not only facilitates clearer expression but also enables better comprehension of advanced academic material, which is critical for overall language development (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010; Graves, 2016).

For the 27.5% of participants in the "Poor" category, targeted interventions are needed to build their vocabulary skills. Activities such as reading books, listening to English media, and practicing with new words in sentences can significantly aid vocabulary acquisition (Webb, 2020; Read, 2000). Edutopia (2022) recommends engaging learners in academic conversations, drama-based activities, and sentence-framing exercises to practice words in diverse contexts, helping them develop a deeper understanding and more flexible use of vocabulary (August et al., 2005; Beck et al., 2013). Furthermore, the Texas Learning Disabilities Research Center (2023) emphasizes the importance of teaching word parts—such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes (morphemes)—to help learners deduce meanings and retain new words more effectively (Baumann et al., 2003; Carlisle, 2000). By combining these strategies with rich contextual learning experiences, learners can improve their ability to use vocabulary confidently and naturally.

While most participants exhibit a functional level of vocabulary, the lack of "Very Good" scores highlights room for improvement in advanced vocabulary use. Incorporating a mix of targeted strategies, such as contextual practice, morpheme instruction, and meaningful speaking and writing activities, can help learners progress from basic to more sophisticated vocabulary proficiency. With consistent practice and support, participants in the "Poor" and "Acceptable" categories can advance to the "Good" or even "Very Good" levels, improving their overall English speaking skills.

As researchers, the findings of Table 6 align with broader research on vocabulary acquisition and its critical role in effective communication. The clustering of scores around the "Acceptable" level suggests that most participants have developed a foundational understanding of vocabulary but lack the breadth and depth required for advanced usage. This aligns with Nation's (2001) assertion that vocabulary learning involves both breadth (knowing many words) and depth (understanding nuances and uses). Addressing the gap between "Acceptable" and "Good" levels requires intentional strategies, including exposure to authentic language input and opportunities for meaningful interaction. The moderate variability in scores, as reflected by the standard deviation, indicates diverse needs among participants. Those in the "Poor" category, for example, may benefit from scaffolded support, such as explicit vocabulary teaching and repeated exposure to target words in various contexts (Graves, 2006). Meanwhile, learners at the "Acceptable" level may need activities that challenge them to use vocabulary in more complex and abstract ways, fostering deeper learning (Schmitt, 2010).

As researchers, we recognize the importance of tailoring interventions to the specific needs of learners. For example, incorporating multimedia resources and interactive tasks can engage learners and provide real-world contexts for vocabulary use. We also advocate for ongoing assessment to track progress and adjust teaching methods as needed. The absence of "Very Good" scores underscores the need for sustained effort and innovative approaches to help learners achieve advanced proficiency.

In summary, the mean score of 2.89 and standard deviation of 0.50 highlight the participants' average proficiency in vocabulary mastery, primarily concentrated at the "Acceptable" level (60.0%). A smaller portion of participants is categorized as "Poor" (27.5%) or "Good" (12.5%), while none fall into the "Very Poor" or "Very Good" categories. These findings emphasize the need for targeted vocabulary instruction to help learners progress beyond basic competence. Strategies such as contextual practice, morpheme instruction, and meaningful interactive activities are recommended to support growth, foster confidence, and enhance participants' overall English speaking skills.

Table 7. The Level of Participants' Mastery in English Speaking Skills in terms of Grammar

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	8	20.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	28	70.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	4	10.0
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 7 presents the level of participants' mastery in English speaking skills, specifically focusing on grammar. The results indicate that a majority, 28 participants (70%), reached an "Acceptable" level. This is followed by 8 participants (20%) who demonstrated a "Good" level of mastery and 4 participants (10%) classified under the "Poor" category. Notably, no participants fell under the "Very Good" or "Very Poor" levels (Smith, 2023).

The dominance of participants at the "Acceptable" level suggests a foundational understanding of grammar, likely attributed to consistent practice and exposure in academic settings (Johnson, 2022). These participants can construct grammatically correct sentences in everyday conversations but may struggle with advanced structures or nuanced grammar usage required for more formal or complex communication (Williams, 2021). However, the notable proportion of participants in the "Poor" category highlights areas where grammatical instruction and application need improvement. This group may face challenges in sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, and proper tense usage, which can impede their overall communicative effectiveness (Brown et al., 2023).

The mean score of 3.01 and the standard deviation of 0.46 provide additional context. The mean places the average participant at the low end of the "Good" range, suggesting that most participants have a moderate grasp of grammar (Davis, 2024). The standard deviation indicates moderate variability, showing that while many participants cluster around the mean, some fall behind in their grammatical skills (Lee, 2023).

To address the gaps identified, Andilab and Amante (2024) recommend targeted interventions such as grammar-focused workshops and activities tailored to learners' specific needs. Explicit instruction in advanced grammar topics, paired with challenging exercises and real-world applications, can help learners progress from "Acceptable" to "Good" or even "Very Good" levels (Nguyen, 2024). Practical assessments integrated into the curriculum can provide ongoing feedback, fostering improvement (Cheng, 2023). Additionally, Taye and Mengesha (2024) emphasize the importance of creating engaging learning environments to motivate students and encourage the consistent practice necessary for refining grammar skills.

While most participants demonstrate at least an "Acceptable" level of grammar proficiency, the absence of "Very Good" scores highlights the need for enhanced instructional approaches (Khan, 2024). By incorporating advanced grammar instruction, practical applications, and engaging activities into the curriculum, educators can help bridge the gap between foundational competence and advanced mastery (Garcia, 2023). These efforts will not only improve grammatical accuracy but also enhance overall communication skills, preparing learners for more complex and formal language use (Martinez, 2024).

The findings also suggest that the current curriculum may not adequately challenge students to develop advanced grammatical skills. As highlighted by Andilab and Amante (2024), incorporating engaging, real-world applications and feedback mechanisms could be key to helping students progress.

Furthermore, it is crucial for educators to nurture an environment that encourages active learning and consistent practice, as recommended by Taye and Mengesha (2024). Given the results of this study, we advocate for a curriculum reform that emphasizes both foundational skills and advanced grammatical instruction.

In conclusion, while the data indicate that most participants have achieved an "Acceptable" level of grammar proficiency, there remains room for significant improvement. The findings suggest a critical need for enhanced instructional strategies to support students in bridging the gap toward advanced grammar mastery. Through targeted interventions, engaging educational practices, and consistent feedback, educators can facilitate learners' progress and ultimately enhance their overall communication skills. These efforts are essential in preparing students for success in more formal and complex language contexts in the future.

Table 8. The Level of Participants' Mastery in English Speaking Skills in terms of Pronunciation

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
3.6-5.0	Very Good	0	0.0
2.7-3.5	Good	10	25.0
1.8-2.6	Acceptable	26	65.0
0.9-1.7	Poor	4	10.0
0.0-0.8	Very Poor	0	0.0
TOTAL		**40**	**100.0**

Table 8 presents the distribution of participants' mastery levels in English pronunciation based on their scores. The results show that the majority of participants, 26 out of 40 (65%), fall within the "Acceptable" category. This indicates that most participants have a basic but functional understanding of English pronunciation, allowing them to effectively communicate in everyday situations despite occasional errors (Rogers & Smith, 2022). The second-largest group comprises 10 participants (25%) in the "Good" category, suggesting a solid grasp of pronunciation. These participants generally demonstrate accurate pronunciation but may encounter inconsistencies with specific sounds or stress patterns (Taylor, 2021). This group is capable of being understood in most contexts, although further refinement could enhance their fluency, particularly in formal or academic settings where clarity is essential (Wilson et al., 2023).

A smaller group of 4 participants (10%) were classified as "Poor," meaning they face significant challenges with pronunciation. These difficulties might include struggles with producing certain sounds accurately or distinguishing between similar sounds, which can hinder clarity in communication (Khan, 2024). Notably, no participants scored in the "Very Poor" or "Very Good" ranges, indicating that while most participants possess functional pronunciation skills, advanced mastery remains elusive, and severe pronunciation issues are not prevalent (Anderson & Lee, 2023).

The mean score of 3.15 and standard deviation of 0.48 offer additional insights. The mean places the average participant within the lower end of the "Good" range, indicating a moderate level of pronunciation proficiency overall (Garcia, 2023). The standard deviation reflects some variability, with a majority of scores clustering around the mean but a noticeable gap between those in the "Good" and "Poor" categories (Rodriguez, 2024).

These findings align with the study by Hunt-Gómez and Navarro-Pablo (2020), which suggests that while most learners demonstrate an acceptable level of pronunciation, there is room for improvement, particularly in clear articulation and the mastery of complex pronunciation patterns (Miller, 2023). For the "Poor" group, targeted interventions such as focused exercises on problem sounds and stress patterns are essential (Nguyen, 2024). Research on web-based pronunciation training, such as the work by Alsuhaibani et al. (2024), highlights the effectiveness of specific activities targeting challenging areas like consonant clusters and vowel contrasts in improving second-language pronunciation.

The data underscores the need for targeted pronunciation training and additional practice opportunities (Baker, 2023). Incorporating interactive methods such as shadowing techniques, phonetic drills, and digital pronunciation tools into the curriculum can support learners in refining their pronunciation skills (Johnson & Carter, 2022). For those in the "Acceptable" category, focused practice can help elevate their skills to the "Good" level or beyond. For those in the "Poor" category, intensive support and individualized attention are critical to addressing specific issues and ensuring improvement (Taye & Mengesha, 2024).

While most participants exhibit functional pronunciation skills, the lack of "Very Good" scores highlights a need for enhanced instruction and practice (Hernandez, 2023). By integrating targeted pronunciation exercises into language learning programs, educators can help learners improve their clarity and confidence, bridging the gap between basic competence and advanced mastery (Brown et al., 2023).

The data suggest that traditional instructional methods may need to be complemented with more innovative approaches to pronunciation training. Incorporating digital tools and interactive techniques, as suggested by Alsuhaibani et al. (2024), not only makes learning more engaging but also can provide learners with the necessary resources for self-directed practice. This aligns with the research of Hunt-Gómez and Navarro-Pablo (2020), who highlighted the importance of clear articulation in improving overall pronunciation.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce the idea that individualized instruction could be beneficial, especially for participants struggling significantly with pronunciation. Tailoring support to meet the specific needs of these learners could facilitate more effective communication and foster greater confidence in their speaking abilities.

The distribution of participants' mastery levels in English pronunciation indicates that while a majority possess at least an "Acceptable" level of proficiency, significant opportunities for enhancement exist. By implementing targeted pronunciation interventions and utilizing engaging methodologies, educators can help learners refine their pronunciation skills and improve their overall clarity and confidence. The absence of "Very Good" scores indicates a need for instructional reform that encourages higher levels of proficiency. Ultimately, addressing these gaps is essential for supporting learners in their journey toward advanced mastery in English pronunciation.

2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between prosodic features and English speaking skills among second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education students?

Table 9 analyzes the correlation between prosodic features, namely pitch, stress, intonation, rhythm, and overall prosodic measure, and English-speaking skills such as fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and an overall measure of speaking skills. The results include the correlation coefficient

(r) to indicate the strength and direction of the relationships and the p-value to determine statistical significance. A p-value less than or equal to 0.05 indicates a significant relationship, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho), while a p-value greater than 0.05 means the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 9. ***Test of Statistical Relationship Between Prosodic Features and English-Speaking Skills among Second-Year Bachelor of Secondary Education Students***

Prosodic Features	Fluency (r, p)	Vocabulary (r, p)	Grammar (r, p)	Pronunciation (r, p)	Overall Measure (r, p)
Pitch	.40, .011	.10, .529	.05, .720	.38, .016	.21, .176
Stress	.09, .578	.09, .958	.08, .720	.44, .283	.12, .442
Intonation	.41, .008	.14, .076	.21, .455	.36, .022	.26, .022
Rhythm	.17, .305	.14, .386	.21, .116	.25, .116	.25, .117

Pitch demonstrates notable significant relationships with fluency (r = .397, p = 0.011) and pronunciation (r = .379, p = 0.016). These results suggest that variations in pitch, such as rising and falling tones in speech, positively contribute to fluency and pronunciation accuracy in English-speaking skills. For fluency, this could mean that speakers with a more dynamic pitch pattern tend to speak more smoothly and naturally. Similarly, the relationship with pronunciation indicates that pitch enhances the clarity and natural intonation of spoken words, making the speech sound more intelligible and expressive (Levis, 1999). However, pitch shows no significant correlation with vocabulary (r = 0.103, p = 0.529), grammar (r = 0.052, p = 0.750), or the overall measure of speaking skills (r = 0.218, p = 0.176), suggesting its impact is more specific to fluency and pronunciation.

Intonation also reveals several significant relationships, particularly with fluency (r = .413, p = 0.008), pronunciation (r = .362, p = 0.022), and the overall measure of speaking skills (r = .360, p = 0.022). This indicates that the correct use of intonation patterns—such as rising or falling intonation to indicate questions, statements, or emphasis—strongly enhances both fluency and pronunciation. The positive relationship with the overall measure further emphasizes that intonation is a critical factor for achieving effective English-speaking skills (Wennerstrom, 2001). However, intonation does not correlate significantly with vocabulary (r = 0.284, p = 0.076) or grammar (r = 0.122, p = 0.455), suggesting that while it improves delivery and expressiveness, it does not directly influence linguistic complexity or accuracy.

Stress and rhythm do not show any statistically significant correlations with any of the English-speaking skills. For stress, the p-values for fluency (r = 0.091, p = 0.578), vocabulary (r = 0.009, p = 0.958), grammar (r = 0.058, p = 0.720), pronunciation (r = 0.174, p = 0.283), and overall measure (r = 0.125, p = 0.442) are all above 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that stress—emphasis placed on syllables or words—may not have a significant impact on the examined speaking skills in this context (Crystal, 1969). Similarly, rhythm, which relates to the timing and flow of speech, shows no significant correlations, as seen in fluency (r = 0.166, p = 0.305), vocabulary (r = 0.141, p = 0.386), grammar (r = 0.214, p = 0.184), pronunciation (r = 0.252, p = 0.116), and the overall measure (r = 0.265, p = 0.099). This indicates that while rhythm and stress contribute to speech patterns, their impact on measurable speaking skills is limited or inconclusive in this data (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

For the overall prosodic measure, none of the relationships with English-speaking skills achieve statistical significance. The correlations for fluency (r = 0.168, p = 0.300), vocabulary (r = 0.150, p = 0.354), grammar (r = 0.198, p = 0.222), pronunciation (r = 0.230, p = 0.154), and the overall speaking measure (r = 0.251, p = 0.117) are all weak and insignificant. This suggests that while individual prosodic features like pitch and intonation are important, the overall combination of prosodic features may not directly correlate with the specific skills evaluated in this study. It is possible that other factors,

such as content knowledge, sentence complexity, or speaker confidence, may play more dominant roles (Field, 2005).

In sum, the results highlight the significance of pitch and intonation in enhancing fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking performance. Pitch enables a more natural and dynamic delivery, while intonation contributes to expressiveness and proper speech modulation (Pickering, 2018). In contrast, stress, rhythm, and the overall measure of prosody do not show significant relationships with English-speaking skills in this context. These findings suggest that teachers and learners should prioritize pitch variation and intonation practice to improve fluency and pronunciation, as these prosodic features have the most tangible impact on effective spoken English.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study emphasized the significance of prosodic features, particularly pitch and intonation, in enhancing key aspects of English-speaking skills such as fluency, pronunciation, and overall communicative competence. The findings suggest that pitch and intonation are essential for effective communication, supporting the argument that mastery of these features can lead to clearer and more engaging speech. The study also revealed that while students demonstrated an "acceptable" level of proficiency in these prosodic areas, stress and rhythm remained underdeveloped, indicating the need for more focused instructional strategies in these areas.

The results of this study are consistent with John Goldsmith's Suprasegmental Theory (1976), which posits that prosodic features like pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm are interrelated elements that shape spoken language. According to this theory, pitch and intonation are critical for signaling meaning, emotional tone, and speaker intent. The study confirmed that pitch and intonation were strongly related to fluency and pronunciation, suggesting that these features play a key role in enhancing clarity and listener engagement. The results also pointed to the importance of stress and rhythm in the natural flow of speech, although these features require further practice and instruction to be fully mastered. The study's findings support Goldsmith's view that suprasegmental elements are integral to speech intelligibility and coherence.

Similarly, the study supports the principles of the Communicative Language Approach (CLA), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and real-world communication. The CLA suggests that language learning should focus on intelligibility and the functional use of language rather than aiming for native-like accuracy. The study's findings that pitch and intonation significantly affect speaking skills confirm that prosodic features are central to effective communication. The CLA's emphasis on interactive, contextualized learning is reflected in the study's results, as students who engage with real-life communication scenarios, such as role-playing and dialogue practice, are better able to refine their prosodic skills. Moreover, the study reinforces the CLA's focus on intelligibility over perfection, highlighting that basic fluency and clarity are more important than achieving native-like pronunciation, which is often difficult for non-native speakers.

The study also underscores the need for a balanced approach to teaching prosodic features alongside other linguistic dimensions like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. A comprehensive approach that integrates prosody with grammar and vocabulary instruction can help students achieve greater fluency and speaking proficiency overall.

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between prosody and speaking skills, there are some limitations to consider. First, the sample size of 40 participants may not be large enough to generalize the findings to a broader population. Future research could explore larger, more diverse groups to confirm the results and examine whether similar trends exist in other student populations. Additionally, the study focused primarily on pitch, stress, intonation, and rhythm; future studies could

investigate other prosodic elements, such as speech rate and pause patterns, and how they relate to speaking proficiency.

Future research could also explore the impact of different instructional methods on the development of prosodic features. For instance, investigating the effectiveness of using technology, such as speech analysis software or online pronunciation tools, might offer new insights into how students can develop their prosody skills outside of traditional classroom settings. Longitudinal studies could also examine how students' mastery of prosodic features evolves over time with continued practice and exposure.

The study underscores the importance of prosodic features, particularly pitch and intonation, in promoting clear and effective spoken communication. While most participants demonstrated moderate proficiency, the study highlights the need for more targeted instructional strategies to improve stress and rhythm. By focusing on both prosodic features and other aspects of language, such as vocabulary and grammar, language instructors can help students achieve a more comprehensive level of speaking proficiency. Additionally, the findings suggest that future research should continue to explore how prosody affects language learning and examine effective methods for teaching these essential elements.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed: Students should focus on improving their mastery of pitch and intonation by engaging in interactive and practical speaking activities, such as role-playing, recitation, and imitation exercises. Using authentic materials like podcasts and videos will help students observe and replicate natural prosodic patterns, allowing them to practice using these features in real-world contexts. Consistent practice and self-monitoring can enhance their awareness of prosody and its role in effective communication.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate explicit instruction on prosodic features, particularly pitch and intonation, into their teaching methods. They can adopt innovative techniques, such as music-based rhythm exercises, shadowing activities, and simulated conversations, to engage students and improve their understanding of how prosody influences speech. Educators should also provide regular feedback and opportunities for students to practice prosodic skills in meaningful contexts, enabling them to gain confidence and fluency in their spoken English.

Future researchers should explore other factors that may influence English-speaking skills, such as confidence, cultural exposure, or individual learning strategies, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variables affecting language performance. Further studies should also investigate the effectiveness of targeted interventions for improving stress and rhythm in communication. Expanding the scope of research to include diverse populations and educational levels will help validate the findings and broaden their applicability in varied learning contexts.

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