



## The Influence of Using English Language Suprasegmental Features on Developing L2 Learners' Verbal Communication Skills

(A Case Study of ALFashir University)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at identifying the influence of using the English language suprasegmental features on the development of verbal communication skills among English language learners. The study was based on descriptive and experimental methods. The sample of the study consisted of students from Al-Fashir University (Faculty of Education) (30 students) and Sudanese university teachers from Khartoum State (42 teachers). The data were collected by analyzing various tests for students and questionnaires for teachers. The data were analyzed through a descriptive statistic in which frequencies, percentages, means and their standard deviations were used. The analysis was carried out through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results indicated an improvement in the performance of the students. Using of English Language segmental features influences positively on the development of verbal communication skills among learners of English as a second language. The study presented some recommendations that encourage the use of the suprasegmental system in verbal communication.

**Keywords:** Significance, nonnative, interact, intelligibility, pronunciation

### المستخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على تأثير استخدام ملامح النظام الصوتي للغة الإنجليزية على تطوير مهارات الاتصال اللفظي لدى دارسي اللغة الانجليزية. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهجين الوصفي والتجريبي. تكونت عينة الدراسة من طلاب جامعة الفاشر (كلية التربية) (30 طالبا) و أساتذة جامعات سودانية من ولاية الخرطوم (42 أستاذا). تم جمع البيانات عبر تحليل اختبارات متنوعة للطلاب و استبانات للأساتذة. تم تحليل البيانات عبر إحصاء وصفي تم فيه استخدام التكرارات و نسبها المئوية و المتوسطات الحسابية و انحرافاتها المعيارية تم التحليل عبر برنامج الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS). أشارت النتائج إلى وجود تحسن في أداء

الدارسين و أن استخدام ملامح النظام الصوتي الفوقطعي للغة الانجليزية يؤثر إيجابا على تطوير مهارات الاتصال اللفظي لدى دارسي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية. قدمت الدراسة بعض التوصيات التي تشجع على استخدام النظام الصوتي في التواصل اللفظي.  
الكلمات المفتاحية: أهمي، غير الأصليين، تفاعل، النطق.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a developmental process that provides knowledge, skills and experiences to generations so as to be able to communicate fluently, effectively and intelligibly. The process of education could be achieved via the study of language (linguistics) in terms of phonetics and phonological features under the frame work of teaching English as foreign language. Jenkins claims that it is in the area of pronunciation that L2 varieties diverge most from each other linguistically and therefore it is this area that most threatens intelligibility and the majority of communication breakdowns are due to pronunciation errors" There are several factors that combine to create the perception of natural fluent speech. One is the process of modification of speech sound the process of accentuation, rhythm and modification contribute to various features that characterize connected speech. These include: rhythm, liaison, assimilation, juncture and elision (qtd in Rogerson-Revell 2011). Morley (1991) Viewed that "The methodology of teaching must change from emphasizing segmental elements of pronunciation to suprasegmental elements of pronunciation and from linguistic competence to communicative competence" (qtd in Gilakjani, Abbas 2012). Richard C. Jack *et al.*, (2002) stated that 'the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal include...using of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, using of interjections and interruptions'. The current researcher observes that many of English Language learners even at university level show breakdown in their communicative competence and they are unable to speak intelligibly. Therefore, the current researcher wants to conduct a research on this area to investigate the influence of using phonological features on developing L2 learners' verbal Communication skills.

### Statement of the research problem

Communication has become one of the most important factors for the education, development and stability in this modern world (globalization). Foreign language Communicators should be well equipped with the features that make their communication more fluent, intelligible and effective. In Sudan there are large

numbers of groups who are interested in communicating effectively, among them are students of English language at ALFashir University. However, there are many barriers that break them down to speak with good English language phonological features. Many studies have demonstrated that the lacking of fluency and intelligibility in the communication comes from misuse of English language phonological features; segmental and suprasegmental. Hewings, Martin (2004) says: For most students, however, an understandable pronunciation will be an important part of their communication skills...

The problem that the researcher has noticed, is the negligence of using English language phonological features in the verbal communication by both teachers and learners. This problem is surmountable if points of difficulties in the target language are identified. This is the problem which this research attempts to offer solution to. In particular, the work is interested in sorting out points that can facilitate learning of phonological features that characterize the suprasegmental features in English languages.

Although studies have been done on the area of pronunciation aspects worldwide, Arab countries and some others have been done at universities of Sudan however, using of English Language suprasegmental features correctly is still one of the main problems that face L2 learners in the verbal communication. In response to this problem, the current researcher proposes to conduct this study; the influence of using English language suprasegmental features on developing L2learner's verbal communication skills to find out some new insights that will contribute to fill the knowledge gap which exists between the previous studies. Then, the applicability would be possible to be done.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study attempts to achieve the following objectives, to:

1. Investigate L2 learners' awareness and their ability to use suprasegmental features and the changes that attach their communication skills.
2. Find out the influence of suprasegmental features that improve L2 learners' communication skills.
3. Evaluate L2 learners' attitude towards using suprasegmental features in their communication.

4. Identify some areas of difficulties in learning suprasegmental features and to provide some solutions to facilitate the learning process.

### **Question of the study**

The current study attempts to answer the following question:

2. How far suprasegmental features (stress, intonation, thought group) have effect on the development of L2 learners' verbal communication skills?

### **Significance of the study**

In practicing spoken English, pupils should from the beginning be taught features which are characteristically found in spoken English such as contraction and ellipsis, Correct pronunciation, stress and intonation should also be emphasized since they are important to intelligibility. (Ministry of Education, UAE 1998. Teacher's guide P.51) "Many experts agree that because of the link between nuclear stress placement and speech clarity at both segmental (e.g. vowel quality and length) and suprasegmental levels (e.g. stress, rhythm and phrasing), this is one area ... which is important for L2 pronunciation learning, regardless of the level of proficiency aimed at" Rogerson-Revell (2011). The study attempts to fill the knowledge gap in the literature and the previous studies related to the current study. The study tries to find out the influence of using English language phonological features on developing L2 learners' verbal communication skills. The most significant aspect is the intention of adding some new insights to the existing linguistic theories to be used and to generalize the result of the study to be added to the learners' improvement and proficiency as well as contributing to programs of English language teaching and learning.

### **Limitation and delimitation of the study**

The researcher conducts this study in north Darfur state (Al-Fashir University); the disordered and war-torn area which might cause some difficulties during the conductance of the research such as some subjects might drop out during the study. Although the study sample will be selected randomly from the population (L2 learners from ALFashir University and English teachers from six universities) however, the results of the study could be generalized to all university learners in the Sudan.

### **Scientific Terms**

#### **Features**

Aspects or characteristics of a speech that arise from the way the sound is articulated or it sounds to the ear. 'Voicing' is a feature that varies according to whether or not

the vocal cords vibrate during the articulation of a sound /z/ is voiced, for example. other features include 'manner' or what sort of gesture or position is used to make a consonant sound a 'stop' involves blocking the airstream completely for a fraction of a second, as for /p/, while a 'fricative' involves creating a narrow opening through which air escapes, as for /f/.

### **Segments**

A segment is a speech sound such as /m/ or /l/. /m/ for example, is created by vibrating the vocal cords (feature: voiced), closing the mouth at the lips (feature: bilabial), and lowering the soft palate so that air can escape through the nose (feature: nasal). These three gestures occur simultaneously. the result is a voiced bilabial nasal, /m/ thus, segments are units that are built up from features; features are the building blocks for segments.

### **Suprasegmental**

An adjective used to describe the analysis of stretches of speech sounds larger than phonemes...such features as stress, intonation and rhythm.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Functions of stress in communication**

Birjandi *et al.*, (2005:111) says that stressed words are key to excellent pronunciation and understanding of English. Stress in English will help to improve understanding and speaking skills. e.g.: The beautiful mountain appeared transfixed in the distance. (14 syllables) he can come on Sunday as long as he doesn't have to do any home work in the evening (22 syllables) there are five stressed words in each sentence so, take the same time to speak.

#### **Strong and weak syllable in communication**

Rogerson- revell (2011:178) conceptualizes his views says that an ability to recognize and produce the main accentuation patterns is important in order to understand other and to be understood clearly. What is significant about English is the alternation of strong and weak syllable and the degree of contrast between highlighted or stressed syllable and reduced or weakened ones. Therefore, teaching learners to lengthen stressed and shorten unstressed one is important to intelligibility...English has unusually high number of weak form and contracted form and these are much more common than strong forms in fluent speech. However, Mccarthy (2008:97) views that the traditional statement that lexical words are stressed and grammar function words

are not being only a general and tendency, not a rule, even though some consider it a useful fact to import to learners.

### Degree of stress

Skandera *et al.*, (2005) views that the degree to which a word is weakened ... depends on such factors as communicative situation and social class. Katamba (1996:236) adds stress is not an integral part of a vowel it depends on the appearance of the word as a noun or as verb, nouns are first syllable stressed and verbs are second syllable stressed... its location in the phonetic representation of a word may depend on the presence of certain affixes or as a noun or as a verb e.g. Nation national nationalist nationalize nationality nationalistic nationalization. Nathan (2008:32) adds traditionally it has been defined with loudness, but stress syllables are not necessarily louder ... they are equal louder longer and exhibit a sharp pitch jump ... there is no absolute definition of a stressed syllable, but stressed syllables are longer than these in the surrounding syllables.

### Word stress patterns

According to Edwards (2004) stress pattern changes according to their surrounding context e.g. thirteen, thirteen days. When suffixes are added e.g. photograph, photography. And according to change of meaning e.g. produce (noun), produce as (verbs). As stated by Roach (2002) the primary stress is on the first syllable of the suffix. If the stem consists of more than one syllable, there will be secondary stress on one of the syllables of the stem. This cannot fall on the last syllable of the stem and is; if necessary, moved to an earlier syllable. For example, in, Japan /dʒə'pæn/, the primary stress is on the last syllable. But when we add the stress- carrying suffix, -ese, the primary stress is on the suffix and the second stress is placed not on the second syllable but on the first: Japanese, /dʒæpən'hi:z/.

-ee	-eer	-ese	-ette	-esque
Refugee	Mountaineer	Portuguese	Cigarette	Picturesque
/refjʊdʒi:/	/maʊntɪ'nɪə/	/pɔ:ʃə'gi:z/	/sɪgr'et/	/pɪktʃr'esk/
Evacuee	Volunteer	Journalese	Launderette	
/ɪvækjʊi://	/vɒlən'tɪə/	/dʒɜ:nl'ɪ:z/	/lə:ndr'et/	

Suffixes that do not affect stress placement: -able, -age, -al, -en, -ful, -ring, -ish, -like, -less, -ly, -mest, -ness, -ous, -fy, -wise, -y.

Suffixes that influence stress in the stem, the primary stress is on the last syllable of the stem. <-eous>: advantage / əd' vɑ:n tɪdʒ /; advantageous / æ dvən' t eɪdʒəs/. <-graphy>: photo /' fəʊtəʊ /; photography / fə' tɒgrəfi /. <-ial>: proverb /' prɒvɜ:b /; proverbial /prə' vɜ:b iəl /. <-ic>: climate /' klɑɪmɪt /; climatic / klɑɪm ætɪk /. <-ion>: perfect / p ɜ: f ɪ k t /; perfection /pə' fe kʃn /. <-ious>: injure /' ɪndʒə /; injurious / ɪn' dʒ ɔ:riəs /. <-ty>: tranquil /' trænkwɪl/; tranquility / træn' kwɪl əti /. <-ive>: reflex /' ri:fleks /; reflexive / rɪ' fleksɪ v /. When the suffixes <-ance>, <-ant> and <-ary> attached to single – syllable stems, the stress is almost always placed on the stem. When the has more than one syllable, the stress is on one of the syllables in the stem .... If the final syllable of the stem is strong, that syllable receives stress. For example: Importance/ ɪm' pɔ:tns / centenary/ sen'ti:nri/. Otherwise the syllable before the last one receives the stress: inheritance/ ɪn'herɪtəns/; military /'mɪlɪtri/. Prefixes: Stress in words with prefixes is governed by the same rules as those for words without prefixes. (p.104 - 107).

### Sentence stress

As stated by Alkhuli (2002:199) sentence stress deals with the stresses taken by the various words of a sentence. e.g., the two boys broke the three windows yesterday. Normally, the primary stress comes on the last word in the sentence i. e., Yesterday. However, this primary stress may come on any word of this sentence for emphasis. We may stress (the) to emphasize definiteness, stress (two) to emphasize the number, stress (boys) to emphasize the doer, stress (broke) to emphasize the object. Contrastive stress... emphasizes the word and at the same time negates the other alternative. However, Ogden (2009) adds that in English, when words are repeated, it is normal for the stress to shift to a different word from the first time round: e.g. K: she is really nice isn't she. J: she is nice. The second 'nice, is de accented.

### Communicative function of intonation

McCarthy (2008:104) adds the intonation ... undoubtedly has advantages... in its concern with the management of longer stretches of discourse and with turn-taking and topic farming and doing away with tone groups certainly avoids an analytical difficulty. Parker *et al.*, (2009:11) claims that in English, the broader the level of phonology analysis, the more serious the communicative consequences of non-acquisition. This “big” feature of pronunciation like intonation, rhythm and stress would seem to have greater communicative value than smaller single sound features.

Alkhali (2000:207) explains the patterns and the functions of intonation

- a. / 232 →/, e.g., 2 The3b'oy2 → with incomplete utterance.
- b. / 231 ↓/, e.g., 2 The boy is 3 h'ere1 ↓ with statement and wh questions.
- c. /233 ↑/, e.g., 2Has he 3c'ome3 ↑ with yes \ no question.
- d. /31 ↓/, e.g., 3C'ome here1 ↓ with imperatives and exclamations.
- e. / 41 ↓/, e.g., 4 St'op here 1 ↓ with imperatives and exclamations.

Pirjandi *et al.*, (2005) views that changing the intonation pattern changes the meaning intonation in American English is the tools for an achieving at last five important aims: a. Expressing new information, b. showing contrast (c) expressing meaning pronunciation, and e, showing mood or personality, confident or nervous, or informed or unfamiliar. Lade faged (2001:250) adds the pitch factors...indicate the personal characteristic of the speaker, whether the speaker is male or female and, to some extent, his or her age...whether the person is clam or angry, happy or sad...all languages use pitch to mark the boundaries of syntactic units...syntactic information is the only linguistic information conveyed by pith in English.

### **Pitch types**

As stated by Ladefoged (2001:23) the pitch of the voice is determined by several factors ... the tension of the vocal folds, an increase in the flow of air out of the longs, the variations in the position of the vocal folds in different phonation types. Lodge (2009:110) says the movement of the vocal cords together and a part during vibration produces a series of fluctuation in air pressure with relatively regular peaks and troughs. If we measure the rate of which the peaks occur in terms of numbers of complete opening and closing movements (cycles) percent ... gives the indication of pitch. Birjandi *et al.*, (2005:137) views the pattern of intonation as six forms: Falling intonation is used in ... statements, wh-questions, confirmatory tag questions. Rising intonation is used in yes – no questions, repeated, rhetorical or emotional question, and question – statement. Rising- falling intonation is used in two- part statements. Falling – rising intonation is used for smoothing and politeness. Take off intonation ... can freely be used for grumbling. Level intonation ... is used by priest ... learners of English never need it.

### **The importance of thought group in communication**

Rogerson- revel (2011:181) explains the division of speech into thought group is important for the speaker as well as the listener, allowing time for speech planning



and decoding. In speech ... we rely only on prosodic cues to know which words are grouped together. We regularly use several cues to signal thought group boundaries often coincide with syntactic boundaries. These are: (a) A pause (b) a fall in pitch (c) lengthening of the last stressed syllable (the subtlest signal) (d) key change. e.g. \\when you're ready to pay\\ (pause)\\ please go to the cash desk\\ (pause)\\. Lane (2010) adds appropriate thought group benefits the student in two ways, organized in to short, meaning full units, the student's message is more comprehensive. In addition, the brief pause or holding of the end of thought group slows the student down, giving him more time to make lexical, grammatical, and pronunciation choices. A thought group includes at least one content (stressed) word and often corresponds to a grammatical structure (e.g., verb phrase, prepositional phrase, or short close). e.g.,

It's not too late to find a room at a national park this season. (p.55-56)

### **The structure and the recognition of thought group**

As katamba (1996:256) says for the purpose of intonation analysis, the English tone units have ... internal organization: (Pre - head) head tonic (tail)

e.g. || he will | phone you when | all | the children are back. ||

ph                    H            TS            T

Normally pitch is low in the pre – head, more or less level high in the head and falling on the tonic; in the tail the pitch pattern established on the tonic is simply continued. The most common direction of pitch movement on the tonic is downward ... frequently pitch moves down on the tonic syllable and remains down until the end of the utterance that it is at beginning. Falling intonation is the unmarked intonation pattern in English. e.g.

'James Thurber was born in O'hio.

The widespread tendency to drop pitch as the end of an utterance approaches might have a physiological explanation. Possibly, as the speaker gradually runs out of breath, there is less and less air to cause the vibration of the vocal cords and consequently they vibrate more sluggishly and the pitch of the utterance goes down. Gilbert (2008:46) summaries the rules of the focus word and thought group as follows: The stressed syllable of a focus word is extra-long, clear, and has a pitch change. The focus word in a sentence is usually a content word. Structure words are

usually de-emphasized to contrast with the focus words. This contrast makes it easier for the hearer to notice the focus word. At the beginning of a conversation, the last content word in a clause or sentence is usually the focus word. After conversation begins, the new thought in each sentence is the focus word. There is often a long pause and a fall in pitch at the end of a thought group to signal that the thought group is finished, so the listener will have more time to think about what you just said. There is one focus word in each thought group.

### **Literature Review**

Celik (2001) has studied: Teaching English Intonation to EFL/ESL Students, his study has argued for the inclusion of intonational features of English in the syllabuses designed for the teaching of English as a second/foreign language. The article discusses the importance of communication in order to maintain organizational success. The article argues that school administrators must be effective communicators in order to empower teachers. Recognizing the content and relational aspect of verbal messages, and realizing the importance of perceptions, positive reinforcement, active listening, flexible listening styles are all essential for effective communication.

Alam (2003) has studied the improving oral communication skills of Pakistani public schools' students four students were being selected. He adopted the qualitative method using the following tools for data collection: observation, interview (three class rooms) and audio recording. Finally, the researcher has come out with the following findings:

1. Though the results of the present study are in favor of the phonetic factor in stuttering, the fact that non –emphatic and the voiceless consonants were stuttered more than their emphatic and voiced counterparts.
2. The discrepancy in the frequency of stuttering on a given sound when it is in word initial position as compared with the frequency of stuttering on that sound when it is the initial sound of other syllables of the words.

### **Study procedure**

**Method:** the researcher uses descriptive and experimental methods for the study.

**Population and sampling:** the total population of the study is 100 students from university of ALFashir (male/ female) of academic year 2017 – 2018 semester six, majoring in English language. Their ages are around 20 years old they studied English

language at previous stages (basic and secondary level). They have background about English language suprasegmental features. The researcher selects 30 subjects using stratified random sampling technique to represent the total population in the influence of using phonological features on developing L2 learners' verbal communication skills. the researcher also structuralizes a questionnaire (scale type) for 42 university teachers in Khartoum state to support the question and the hypothesis of the research.

**Tools of data collection:** the researcher uses oral and written test to investigate the influence of using suprasegmental features on developing L2 learners' verbal communication skills. In addition to that, questionnaire for 42 university teachers in Khartoum state is used to support the questions and the hypotheses of the research.

**Statistics:** the data were analyzed by means of a descriptive statistic in which frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages and their standard deviations are used. The analysis will be carried out through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### **Pretest procedures**

**Oral test:** Participants verbalize the sentence (she got a dog.) individually to show falling and rising pitch. meanwhile the participant speaks, his/her voice will be recorded for analysis using spectrogram instrument to evaluate the influence of using English Language suprasegmental features on developing L2 learners' verbal communication skills.

#### **Written test**

Participants were asked to:

- 1- Put the stress mark (/) on the right syllable to show its effect.
- 2- Insert falling and rising intonation pattern at the end each sentence.
- 3- Put the marks (. and?) at the end of each word to show the effect of pitch change.
- 4- Tick the correct thought group that they hear in similar pair sentences.
- 5-Identify the thought group in a text by using the marks (/, //).
- 6- Match the sentence from A with its meaning from B in C to show the effect of stress on changing the meaning.

**Course contents:** Participants will be taught a course of English Language suprasegmental features (treatments) for 12 weeks which covers the following variables: Stress, intonation and the thought group.

**The lesson plan:** the lesson plan includes: Presentation, Practice and Production.

**Presentation:** the researcher explains the above contents by using videos and films which are presented by native speakers.

**Practice:** It ranges from listening to authentic materials up to choral technique, individual work, pair and group work as a preparation for practice to develop fluency in the communication skills. See Richard, etal (2002)

### **Production**

This is based on communicative learning and task-based approach activities. The follow up and homework pronunciation activities to reinforce the cyclicity of the practice so as to investigate the influence of using English Language suprasegmental features on developing L2 Learners' verbal communication skills.

### **Posttest procedures**

After they have been being exposed to suprasegmental features (stress, intonation and thought group.) for five weeks (equals 24hours), then the participants will be exposed to the posttest (the same previous test (pretest) to measure their achievement. Then the results of the two tests will be correlated and analyzed linguistically and statistically to justify the influence of using English Language suprasegmental features on improving L2 learners' oral communication skills.

### **Questionnaire**

This will be used in six universities for 42 English Language teachers to reinforce the study questions and the hypotheses.

### **Method of scoring free speech**

The method which is assigned for scoring (to assess the influence of using English Language suprasegmental features on developing l2 learners' verbal communication skills) is analytic scoring method which is considered more appropriate method than impression-based holistic method in this case. For the creditability of marking, two university teachers and the current researcher mark the papers of subjects individually then the average of the final score will be registered and analyzed.

### **Results and Discussion**

The researchers will present and discuss the results of the study according to its question.

How far suprasegmental features have positive influence on developing L2 learners' verbal communication skills?

**1. Pre & post-test****Table (1): Free speech evaluation (Intonation) pretest result**

Sentence:	Intonation							
	Falling pitch (completion)				Rising pitch (surprising)			
She got a dog	No of		No of		No of		No of	
	Correct	%	incorrect	%	Correct	%	incorrect	%
	responses		responses		responses		responses	
	20	86.96	3	13.4	23	100	0	0

Note: Pretest respondents are 23. Seven students were absent.

**Table (2): Free speech evaluation (Intonation) posttest result**

Sentence:	Intonation							
	Falling pitch (completion)				Rising pitch (surprising)			
She got a dog	No of		No of		No of		No of	
	Correct	%	incorrect	%	Correct	%	incorrect	%
	responses		responses		responses		responses	
	22	75.86	7	24.14	27	93.10	2	6.90

Note: Posttest respondents are 29. one student was absent.

As shown in the table no (1) and (2) oral pretest and posttest. Using of falling intonation to show completion of speech in the sentence: 'she got a dog'. The number of correct responses in the pretest are 20 (86.97%) from 23 respondents where as the number of correct responses in the posttest are 22(75.86%) from 29 respondents. The number of incorrect responses in the pretest are (13.04%) from 23 respondents, whereas the number of incorrect responses in the posttest are 7 (24.14%)from 23 respondents. Comparing the ratio of correct to in correct responses, pretest and posttest, it is apparent that there is a development in the performance of the respondents which means that there is an influence in the using of this feature and it develops the learners verbal communication skills. As shown in the table no (1) and (2) using of rising pitch that shows surprising in the sentence: 'she got a dog'. The number of correct responses in the oral pretest are 23 (100%) from 23 respondents. The number of correct responses in the posttest are 27 (93.10%) from 29 respondents. The number of incorrect responses in the pretest are zero (0%) from 23 respondents. Whereas the numbers of in correct responses in the posttest are2 (6.90) from 29 respondents. Comparing the results of pretest and posttest in both falling and rising

intonation, development in the performance of the learners is noticeable. This means the learners have influenced by the using of suprasegmentals.

**Table (3): Productive pretest / posttest paired sample statistics for suprasegmental**

	Stress		intonation	
	Pre	post	Pre	post
Mean	4.4897	7.6897	5.1034	6.5862
Std. Deviation	2.8834	2.4106	2.3543	2.1509
Std. Error Mean	0.5354	0.4476	0.4372	0.3994

**Table (4): Descriptive Statistics of written pretest / posttest for suprasegmental**

	N	Minimum		Maximum		Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Degree		Degree					
		Pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	Post
Word	29	.00	.50	5.00	4.50	1.9828	2.7414	1.66628	.99661
Sentence	29	.00	.00	1.00	1.50	.3966	.4483	.36301	.50612
Word class	29	.00	.00	4.50	9.00	2.1207	4.5000	1.41834	2.10442
Stress	29	.00	3.00	9.00	13.50	4.4897	7.6897	2.88337	2.41059
Pitches	29	1.00	1.50	5.00	6.50	2.6379	3.3103	1.17941	1.17575
Thought group	29	.00	.00	1.50	1.50	.9655	.9138	.49877	.50123
Pausing	29	.00	.00	6.00	5.50	1.5345	2.4655	1.45732	1.55799
Intonation	29	1.00	1.50	10.00	11.00	5.1034	6.5862	2.35425	2.15087

As shown from the table No (3) and (4), the result of using intonation written pretest and posttest explains that the minimum degree of pretest is (1.00) and of the posttest is (1.50). the maximum degree of pretest is (10.00). The mean for pretest (intonation) is (5.10) and of the posttest is (6.59). the paired difference of mean is (1.49); (6.59-5.10). This proves that respondents have influenced by the using of Suprasegmental features (intonation, thought group and pausing).

As for as the result of using of stress is concerned, the minimum degree of written pretest is (0.00) and of the posttest is (3.00). the maximum degree of pretest is (9.00) and of the posttest is (13.00). The of using stress pretest is (4.49) and of the posttest is (7.69). the paired difference of mean is (3.10), (7.68-4.58). Development in the

performance of the respondents is noticeable, this proves that the respondents have influenced by the using of suprasegmental features (stress).

### Questionnaire

Concerning the result of the questionnaire, table No (5) shows that the most frequent answer of the respondents is (strongly agree/agree) to all statements and the mean is (1.90) which falls within the range of the response (agree) according to likert scale measurement. However, the total result of the respondents is (agree) which means that the respondents agree with the questionnaire statement that support the positive influence of using stress (suprasegmental feature) on developing L2 learners verbal communication skills.

**Table (5): Descriptive statistics of questionnaire for suprasegmentals**

Statement (Suprasegmentals)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
I realize that using of suprasegmentals is the key aspect for leaners to develop their communications kills.	42	1.74	.665	Strongly agree
I notice that using suprasegmental features makes positive changes in learners' communication skills such as smooth-talk when I teach them.	42	1.64	.618	Strongly agree
Most of learners' communication problems result from the misuse of suprasegmentals.	42	2.21	.871	Agree
I observe that the use of suprasegmentals makes learners feel more confident in communication.	42	1.79	.682	Strongly agree
Some of learners who are not familiar with the use of suprasegmentals are hesitant in communication.	42	1.88	.993	Agree
I realize that using suprasegmentals specially thought groups and pausing help stammered learners to solve communicational problems such as being worried in the interactions.	42	2.02	.950	Agree
Limited use of suprasegmentals decrease learners self-confidence, social interactions and negatively affects evaluation of speakers' abilities and credibility.	42	2.02	.841	Agree
I observe that using of suprasegmental features by learners enable them to make communication more cognitive, acoustic and auditory influential.	42	2.07	.808	Strongly agree
The use of suprasegmentals specifically pausing and thought group help learners to control the regulation of pace and timing in their communication.	42	1.74	.587	Agree
Total of suprasegmentals	42	1.9021	.41005	Agree

### Summary of the results

The most important outcomes of the study are:

- 1- Although the time of exposing the subjects to the treatment was short however little progress was shown in their performance and they were influenced by the using of English Language suprasegmental features. Because there was an increasing degree in the results of posttest questions see tables No 1 and 2.
- 2- As for as speaking is concerned, using suprasegmental features (intonation), the average of development in the performance is weak as in tables 1 and 2. Which means verbal communication is a complicating area for L2 learners.
- 3- Seven students were reluctant to attend the speaking pretest and they escaped however, after they were being exposed to treatment, they became confident to attend the posttest. only one student was absent No (7) this means the process of exposing L2 learners to suprasegmental features is influential factor.
- 4- The total reaction of teachers towards the questionnaire is (agree) which means that using suprasegmentals are influential factor in the verbal communication. Supra-segmentals are the keys to Intelligibility and fluency Table No (5).
- 5- The result of spoken and written test (Tables 1 and 2) explain that most study subjects were unable to understand the sound of native speaker; the reason is lacking the ability of using phonological features.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends the following:

- 1- It is clear from the result and the analysis that university learners face a big challenge in using suprasegmental features therefore; the teaching of introduction to suprasegmental features should start from the secondary level as a base for university. Teaching phonics from the very beginning will enable the L2 learners not to develop bad habits and fossilized errors.
- 2- University teachers should expose L2 learners to the sounds of English native speakers by using modern technologies such as videos to familiarize them with the using of suprasegmental features.
- 3- L2 learners lack of natural language environment or language situation where they could interact freely. Rooms are artificial; they need more real situations such as English language clubs. There for, they should be used the language in real situations such as language clubs.



### Further suggestions

The researcher suggests the following topics that could be conducted by the coming researcher:

- 1- Problems facing Sudanese English language learner in using supra segmental features.
- 2- English suprasegmental features that create problems for L2 learner in the communication process.
- 3- Suprasegmental factors that affecting L2 learners speaking skills.
- 4- Investigating the role of correct pronunciation on developing reading skills.
- 5- Investigating the use of suprasegmental features by a university teacher.

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