CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains about research background, research questions, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Research Background

In English spoken contains features which make our speech understood by others. The meaning of a word not only becomes a sign in constructing segmental features, but there are also supra-segmental features such as stress, pitch, intonation and rhythm that are important in carrying the meaning of spoken message and giving language in its overall appearance.[1] These supra-segmental features are the strong sign for interpreting the meaning of communication since they express attitude and emotional of meanings. Deeply, it is important to study the *stress* than other supra-segmental features because did not many people know that stress can distinguishes different part of speech, stress distinguishes a word from a phrase and the stress pattern in derivationally related word also distinguish part of speech, such as; increase (n) /ˈɪn.kriːs/ and increase (v) /ɪnˈkriːs/, import (n) /ˈɪm·pɔrt/ and import (v) /ɪmˈpɔrt/, rebel (n) /ˈreb·əl/ and rebel (v) /rəˈbel/. Indirectly, if you stress in the wrong syllable it also will change the part of speech.

[1] Antony Fox. *Prosodic features and prosodic structure; the phonology of suprasegmentals*. Oxford university press inc. New York, 2000. p. 9.

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Word stress becomes one of the most visible weakness areas of Indonesian ESL (English as second language) learmers in learning English pronunciation. "Stress is defined as a supra-segmental feature of utterances. It applies not to individual vowels and consonants but to whole syllables whatever they might be. A stressed syllable is pronounced with a greater amount of energy than an unstressed syllable and is more prominent in the flow of speech."[2] Besides, "misplacing a stress in a word often result in miscomprehension or changing the meaning of the word."[3] Therefore, studying word stress is important for ESL learners and practicing the stress placement rules can certainly help to enhance learners' communicative competence and language use.

Word stress is considered as problematic area for most ESL learners. They assume that stress is difficult to apply and cannot be learned easily moreover it is not their mother tongue. Instead of that, stress is the key of English pronunciation. If you stress the wrong syllable it may difficult for anyone, especially for native speakers who are listening to understand to what you are trying to say. Native speaker use word stress on their daily spoken naturally, they don't even know they use it. In the other hand, Non-native speakers, who speak

[2] Ladefoged Peter (2006). *A Course in Phonetics*, p.243 taken from a journal written by Sardar Fayyaz ul Hassan, PH.D. The nature of stress in English language – A case study from a perspective of rule-governed approach. 12:12 December 2012. www.languageinindia.com

[3] Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D.M., et.al. *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

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English to native speakers without using word stress, may encounter at least two possible problems: They find it difficult to understand native speakers, especially those speaking fast and the native speakers may find it difficult to understand them. Unfortunately, these cases of pronunciation seem to be ignored by some of ESL learners, especially in Indonesia. The significant thing for them is, they can speak and the others understand their English spoken.

Word stress is not used in all languages, such Japan and French which is pronouncing a syllable with equal sound, but English used it to help in establishing the meaning of a word. Besides, word stress is not an extra additional that you can add to the English word if you want. It is part of language itself and English speakers use word stress to communicate rapidly and accurately, even in a difficult condition. Such in a case; when you are speaking to somebody by telephone and hear the words “photograph” and “photographer” over a very bad line, you do not hear both words clearly. In fact, you hear only the first two syllables of one of these words “photo...” which word is it, photograph or photographer? of course, with word stress you will know immediately which word it is because in reality you will hear either /ˈfoʊ·tə.../ or / fəˈtɑ…/ therefore, without hearing the whole word, you probably know what the word is /ˈfoʊ·tə¸græf/ or /fəˈtɑg·rə·fər/. This case has clearly shows that word stress is important to help us in understanding the English word meaning, even the English spoken message.

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Therefore, in this study the researcher will describe the students' word stress performance of English teacher education department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. This English department is chosen as the research field because in this English department there is no pronunciation class and it changed into speaking 1,2,3 and 4. Substantively with these changes of speaking class standard the students ought to become fast speaking combining with good pronunciation nevertheless English is not students' mother tongue. Thus, those mother tongues will much influence on students' accent especially for those who learn language. For example, when a student said a word "impolite" he or she pronounced it with Madurese accent /ɪmˈpəlɑɪt / the correct one is /ɪmˈpəˈlɑɪt /, although we are the same ESL speakers understand the meaning even its words' stress is placed in the wrong syllable but it will become strange for those native speakers who listen our English accent. Even, it will disturb them in catching our spoken message. Therefore, prosodic interference or transfer effects (interference of L1 prosody on L2) may be a major source of difficulty for ESL learners.

In addition, this study also will be more specified on students at fourth semester because in this semester they have already mastered speaking 1,2,3 and also have gotten many input of language knowledge included phonology. Therefore, they ought to have a good pronunciation included good understanding of word stress itself but in the fact, they did not get a lesson about pronunciation such as *word stress* on their lecture. Whereas, studying word stress is important

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for those who learn language because if they understand well about *word stress*, they will get easy dealing with speaking comprehension, especially if they have a conversation with native speakers. Besides, they also will get easy dealing with listening comprehension, because although their hearing is not quite good since they understand well about *word stress*, it will help them in guessing and establishing the meaning of a word. For those reasons, it shows the importance of studying prosodic supra-segmental especially *word stress* of English for ESL learners.

B. Research Question

The problem statement of this research is focused on students' word stress performance during their speaking performance, they are:

1. What are students' words stress performance at fourth semester of speaking class English teacher education department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?
2. What types of students' common word stress performance at fourth semester of speaking class English teacher education department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?

C. Objective of The Study

Based on the problem statement, therefore the objectives of this research are:

1. To describe students' word stress performance at fourth semester of speaking class English teacher education department correlate to some theories.

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2. To obtain the students' common types of word stress performance committed at fourth semester of speaking class English teacher education department.

D. Significance of The Study

The significance of this study is giving a contribution about the correct use of stress pattern in a communicative context for ESL learners theoretically and practically.

1. For English learners, by this research they will know the importance of implementing word stress on their speaking, especially for those who are English learners, because the impact of it could help them in many aspects such in listening, speaking skills and others.
2. For English teacher, they will get information about their students' weakness in applying word stress on their English speaking and know what students' needs of phonological aspects that have to be added on their speaking class.

E. Scope and Limits of The Study

This research focused on analyzing students' word stress performance at fourth semester of speaking class, therefore it is scoped and limited on:

1. Scope

This study scoped on the analysis of students' word stress performance and its common types at speaking class English teacher education department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

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2. Limitation

This study limited only on the analysis of primary word stress in polysyllabic words on students' performance at fourth semester of speaking class and the result only analyzed using the PRAAT software.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of key terms used in this reseach, therefore it is defined as below:

1. Syllable

Syllable is a unit of pronunciation typically larger than a single sound and smaller than a word.[4] Syllable plays an important rule in establishing the correct place of stress in a word. It figures importantly in the rhythm and prosody of the language, including carries stress.

2. Word stress

Word stress is a syllable that pronounced louder then others, "A stressed syllable is pronounced with a greater amount of energy than an unstressed syllable and it is more prominent in the flow of speech."[5] Besides, the misplacing of it can change part of speech of words and of course it will influence to distinguish the word meaning.

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[4] Marga Vinagre. *The syllable*. Wikispace Phonetics II UAM. http://phoneticsiiuam.wikispaces.com accessed on wenesady 27/04/2015 at 06.00 a.m

[5] Antony Fox. *Prosodic features and prosodic structure; the phonology of suprasegmentals*. p, 9

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3. Acoustic Phonetic

Acoustic phonetics is the study of the acoustic characteristics of speech, including an analysis and description of speech in terms of its physical properties, such as Pitch, frequency, intensity, and duration.[6] Therefore, in this research the researcher will use the acoustic phonetic to describe the students' word stress performance.

[6] Allard Jongman. Acoustic phonetic, http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com accessed on Sunday 29/03/2015 at 05:31 p.m

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