CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, formulation of the problem, objective of the study, focus of the study, significance of the study and operational definition.

A. Background of the Study

The pronunciation of English words is a topic of great complexity and significance in the realm of language acquisition (Torky, 2014). It encompasses a multitude of intricate elements that collectively shape the sound and rhythm of spoken communication (Asrida, 2019). Understanding and mastering these aspects is crucial for learners aiming to achieve fluency and effective oral expression in the English language. The entrenched familiarity with their mother tongue engenders difficulties in adapting to the phonetic intricacies of English. As individuals habitually communicate in their first language throughout their formative years, the phonological patterns and articulatory habits ingrained during this period can significantly influence their acquisition of English pronunciation. This issue poses a notable challenge for Indonesian students grappling with English pronunciation, stemming from the linguistic differences between English and Indonesian. Indonesian, being a syllable-timed language, differs phonologically from the stress-timed nature of English (Roach, 1982).

Indonesian learners often face challenges in adapting to the stress-timed rhythm of English, leading to potential mispronunciations and communication hurdles. The rhythm of English, characterized by stressed syllables occurring at

regular intervals, is notably different from the syllable-timed rhythm of Indonesian. This mismatch can cause Indonesian learners to struggle with English pronunciation, resulting in speech that may be perceived as less fluent or natural (Al-ghozali & Puspitasari, 2005). Furthermore, English word stress, where certain syllables within words are emphasized more than others, adds another layer of complexity. Indonesian, being a syllable-timed language, does not place the same emphasis on word stress, leading learners to often misplace stress in English words (Lasut, 2015). This misplacement can significantly alter the meaning of words or render them difficult to understand. Word stress, a crucial aspect of prosodic features, plays a vital role in English language differentiation (Weda, 2012).

Prosodic features, including stress, linking, and intonation, are essential in second language acquisition (Gilakjani, 2012). The significance of proper English stress placement is underlined, as incorrect stress can lead to misunderstandings the meanings. In Indonesian, word stress does not play a vital role in distinguishing between words and their meanings, in contrast to English where stress can alter the meaning of a word (Wells, 2006). Word stress is a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia, leading to misplacement in pronunciation. Understanding word stress in English is challenging for Indonesian students due to its unpredictable nature, where each word has its distinct stress pattern. This difficulty may stem from underdeveloped speech organs, hindering effective speech production. Kosasih (2017) highlights how a person's native language influences the acquisition of a second language (L2). Indonesian students' struggle with word stress can be attributed to the influence of their first language

2

(L1) and regional dialects. The study suggests that Indonesian students may prefer their native language due to a sense of comfort.

Numerous studies have explored English word stress, shedding light on linguistic proficiency and pronunciation challenges among various learner groups. For instance, Indrayani and Rizki (2019) examined word stress patterns in English noun-to-verb conversion words among adult EFL learners in Indonesia, revealing nuanced insights into stress placement errors. Similarly, Widagsa et al. (2019) investigated the impact of Indonesian prosodic features on English word stress production, emphasizing the crucial role of prosodic elements in second-language pronunciation. Syarifah et al. (2020) contributed by studying gender differences in English word stress production among Madurese students, offering valuable insights into pronunciation acquisition complexities. Ulfah et al. (2022) analyzed word stress pronunciation among Public Relations students, underlining the need for improved pronunciation instruction. Adam et al. (2023) used PRAAT software to assess word stress pronunciation among English Education students, highlighting challenges and the impact of mother tongue influence. Lastly, Nurpahmi et al. (2023) conducted an acoustic analysis of word stress production by Indonesian learners, advocating for tailored instructional strategies to enhance English language proficiency. These studies collectively advance our understanding of word stress acquisition and pronunciation challenges, emphasizing the importance of targeted instructional approaches for enhancing pronunciation skills.

However, this review underscores the crucial importance of understanding and addressing word stress in English pronunciation, especially for Indonesian EFL learners. It synthesizes findings from various studies conducted at different

universities and language programs, Indonesian prosody, developmental patterns, common errors, and gender differences. In contrast, the present research focuses on exploring the hurdles encountered by Indonesian students classified as foreign learners in accurately pronouncing stress in words with two to six syllables. The significance of this investigation lies in recognizing the pivotal role of word stress, a crucial prosodic feature, in the differentiation and nuanced meaning of English words, emphasizing the importance of precise pronunciation for effective communication. The study also aims to delve into the contributing factors that underlie the challenges faced by students in mastering the pronunciation of multi-syllabic word stress. This examination is essential due to the distinct phonological features of Indonesian, a syllable-timed language, and the need to bridge the gap between its linguistic characteristics and the stress-timed nature of English. By uncovering the specific challenges tied to varying syllable lengths, the research seeks to inform tailored pedagogical strategies to enhance the pronunciation ability of Indonesian learners in the domain of English word stress patterns.

Comprehending the rules and patterns of English word stress is essential for achieving clear and natural communication, particularly within the context of Vocational High School students, who are majoring in various fields. The challenge of misplaced stress in pronunciation is a pertinent issue for these students, as they prepare for careers that are closely linked to specific industries. Proficiency in English is imperative in these sectors, and word stress assumes a crucial role in spoken language, significantly influencing effective communication.

The researcher's study focuses on the ability of tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta to accurately place stress, as well as the factors influencing

these students. They face challenges when attempting to mimic native-like pronunciation without adhering to the established pattern or rules of English word stress. This obstacle impedes their capacity to communicate effectively in English, emphasizing the importance of mastering word stress in the language learning process. The research study is titled "Analysis of Word Stress in the Pronunciation of Tenth-Grade Students at SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta."

B. Identification of the Problem

The section dedicated to identifying the problem in this research aims to elucidate the existing issues and phenomena related to the ability of Indonesian students to accurately attribute stress to English words. Based on the background of the study, it can be concluded there are many problems arose. There are:

1. The students' tendency to retain first language accents, influenced by Indonesian and Javanese, complicates pronunciation, potentially causing communication breakdowns due to unclear stress placement.

2. In speaking classes, students often neglect English pronunciation, favoring Indonesian stress patterns, leading to a lack of clarity and understanding in spoken communication.

3. In Bahasa Indonesia, stress patterns are typically more uniform, less prominent, and lack distinct features compared to English, where stress can significantly alter word meanings. This difference presents challenges for Indonesian students learning English, impacting their ability to apply English stress patterns accurately.

4. Despite the emphasis on pronunciation in speaking classes, teachers' misplacement of stress inadvertently influences students, highlighting the need for teacher awareness and corrective measures.

5. Limited exposure to authentic native English pronunciation models creates a gap in learners' comprehension of stress nuances, underlining the importance of investigating the impact of exposure on accurate stress attribution.

C. Focus of the Study

The focus of this study is to examine the accuracy of stress attribution to English words among Indonesian students, specifically targeting words with varying syllable counts ranging from two to six. The researcher limits the research in the tenth-grade students in class Usaha Layanan Pariwisata (ULP) or Tourism Service Business in the academic year 2022/2023 of SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta as subject of research. By concentrating on word stress in two-syllable, three-syllable, four-syllable, five-syllable, and six-syllable English words, the research seeks to comprehensively assess the ability level of Indonesian learners in correctly placing stress. Despite the multifaceted influences on pronunciation, this study primarily directs attention towards linguistic factors. This decision is grounded in the concrete and systematic nature of linguistic factors, which provide a more tangible framework for analysis. In language learning, understanding segmental features, suprasegmental features or prosody, vowel and consonant reduction, phonological rules, phonotactics, and second language (L2) interference aids learners in pinpointing specific areas requiring improvement in pronunciation. By prioritizing

linguistic factors, learners can identify sound rules, intonation patterns, and segmental variations requiring particular attention, facilitating more targeted efforts towards pronunciation enhancement in the second language learning process. This approach ensures a clear and specific focus for the research, delineating the boundaries for discussion and analysis.

D. Formulation of the Problems

The problems of this research were formulated as follows:

1. How is the ability in pronouncing English words regarding stress patterns of the tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta?

2. How do linguistic factors contribute to the challenges faced by students in accurately pronouncing English words concerning stress patterns?

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the ability in pronouncing English words regarding stress patterns of the tenth-grade students in the Tourism Program at SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta.

2. To reveal the factors contributing to the challenges the students face in accurately pronouncing the English words regarding stress patterns.

F.   Significance of the Study

The finding of this research was expected to be useful theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically

By studying the theory of word stress in this research, it will be easier to understand what word stress is and the relationship between word stress and phonology and contribute to pronouncing English words. The researcher conducted this study to enrich knowledge about word stress and to find out the causes of stress misplacement students face. It is hoped that this study will provide new knowledge and understanding about the placement of word stress used in pronouncing English.

2. Practically

a. For the teachers, in order to get more information about word stress, English teachers can improve their approach to stressed word learning by using this study as a guide.

b. For the students, they can become more mindful of possible word stress errors, helping them to create effective learning strategies.

c. For the researchers, those with a research interest that contributes to the field of English word stress. This study can be used as a reference for those conducting similar research. As a result, other researchers can investigate the current research theme more resounding.