

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In our society, information, ideas, or opinions can be delivered through news. The existence of news is very important in spreading information through the public since many events happen every day and bring effects to the society. Nowadays, news is not only delivered through the words but also delivered through pictures and cartoons. Many people use cartoons to make the news become more communicative and informative to the readers.

A political cartoon is published to highlight a particular viewpoint or idea through the use of illustration. Often, the image is exaggerated and intended to be humorous as well as informative. They can also be satirical or even serious in tone, depending on the audience, the artist, and the idea illustrated.

Lately, Iran's nuclear program takes over International attention. Iran said that they only made peaceful nuclear program intended to support self sufficiency in terms of technology improvement and to be less dependence on conservative source of energy. However, Western Countries, mainly the United States and major European Countries like Britain, France and Germany, have been suspecting Iran of developing nuclear weapons for almost three decades, and continuing to press on Iran to stop the program. However, this condition does not

prevent Iran from continuing the development of its nuclear program as national interests. Because of these reasons, the United States of America attempts to make a negative sight of Iran by spreading the issues through mass media that Iran has been developing nuclear weapons. From this booming news, many cartoonists make political cartoons to illustrate these upcoming issues. Their works compiled on online news to make the readers build the interpretation by seeing their works in attractive ways.

The writer chooses two websites which provide the best author of political cartoons. The first websites is www.globecartoon.com whose author is Chapatte, one of the best editorial cartoonist. He was Born in Pakistan, raised in Singapore and in Switzerland and he lived in New York. There, he was an illustrator for *The New York Times* and created "Rob the cybernaut", a comic strip published in *Newsweek International*. He also received the 2011 Thomas Nast award from the Overseas Press Club of America - the first time this prize went to a non-American cartoonist. (cited in www.globecartoon.com)

The second website is www.comicallyincorrect.com whose author is A.F.Branco. He has joined the team at Liberty Alliance. With his brilliantly executed political cartoon, Branco proved that a picture can indeed be worth a thousand words. His cartoons have already gained an international audience. His popular appeal among conservatives recently led to an interview on FOX News.

Now, A.F. Branco is the latest rising star in a long line of political cartoonists, and his work already surpasses some of the giants in the business. (cited in www.comicallyincorrect.com)

In order to build an interpretation towards several political cartoons made by those two best authors, the writer finds some matters that can be analyzed by using semiotic study. According to Eco (1976, cited in Chandler, p.7), everything can be a sign if it generates and conveys meanings. Sign also includes both physical existing and non-existing objects as long as the objects have meanings.

Furthermore, Eco (1976, cited in Chandler, p.2) states that semiotic is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. It means that semiotics deals with everything that stands for something else. In other words, semiotic deals with the nature of individual sign and meanings, and these signs and meanings are only significant when they are related to each other.

The first matter is sign that takes a significant role as the basic concept for interpreting cartoons. The sign can be in the form of an icon, a symbol, or an index which represents words, images, and objects. Each sign applied on the cartoons has its own meaning. Therefore, it is important to combine one sign to another sign to reveal the meaning.

The signs applied in political cartoons also indicate that there are meanings (denotative and connotative) contained. Denotation is the literal meaning while connotation has deeper interpretation than denotation meaning. As John Fiske (1982, cited in Chandler, 2007, p.138) states “denotation is *what* is photographed, connotation is *how* it is photographed”.

The limitation of this study is the writer only analyzes several cartoons which have theme about Iran’s peaceful nuclear program and provides the figures of President of United States of America, Barrack Obama, by using semiotic

theory focusing on the index, icons, symbols found. The writer also tries to explain the connotative meaning of each sign used on the cartoons.

This study is expected to give a contribution in interpreting and comprehending Iran conflict cartoons especially the political cartoons which have a theme about Iran's peaceful nuclear program. This study is also expected to enrich the knowledge of semiotic theory which is applied in analyzing cartoons.

This study offers an analytical framework for understanding how sign, image and other elements of political cartoon become meaningful by using semiotic approach. Therefore the writer entitled this research "A Semiotic Analysis Of Political Cartoon of Iran Nuclear Program".

1.2 Problems of the Study

Related to the background of the study described previously, the research problems are stated as follows:

1. What are semiotic signs that can be found on the political cartoons of Iran nuclear program?
2. What are the connotations built in political cartoons of Iran nuclear program?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems of the study, the objectives of the study are:

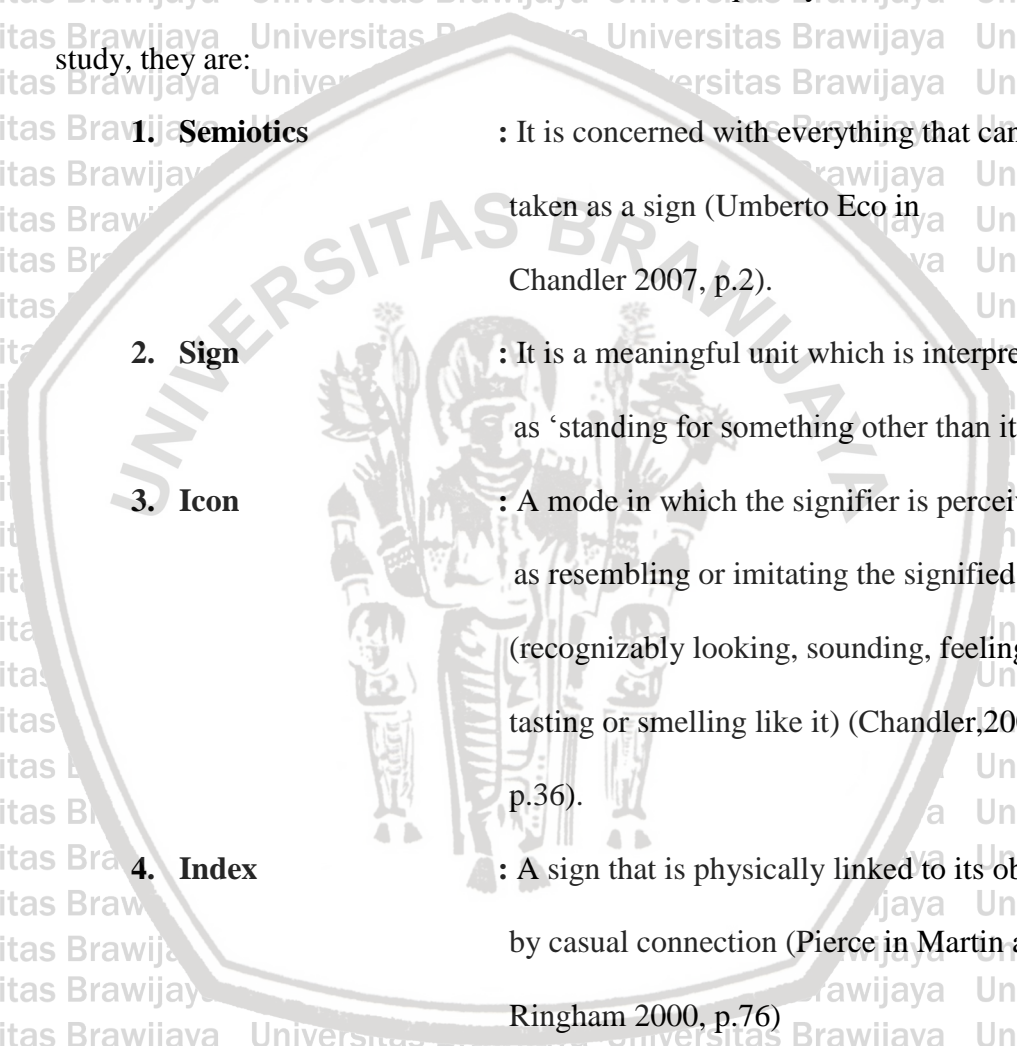
1. To find out the semiotics signs of political cartoons of Iran nuclear program.

2. To identify the connotation built in political cartoons of Iran nuclear program.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

The writer defines some terms that are frequently mentioned in this study, they are:

- 1. **Semiotics** : It is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign (Umberto Eco in Chandler 2007, p.2).
- 2. **Sign** : It is a meaningful unit which is interpreted as 'standing for something other than itself.
- 3. **Icon** : A mode in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified (recognizably looking, sounding, feeling, tasting or smelling like it) (Chandler,2007, p.36).
- 4. **Index** : A sign that is physically linked to its object by casual connection (Pierce in Martin and Ringham 2000, p.76)
- 5. **Symbol** : A mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified but which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional (Chandler, 2007, p.36).
- 6. **Denotation** : It is the definitional, literal, obvious or



common-sense meaning of a sign
(Chandler 2007, p.137).

7. Connotation : It is the socio-cultural and 'personal'
associations (ideological, emotional, etc.)
of the sign (Chandler 2007, p.137).

8. Political Cartoon : An illustration which is designed to convey
a social or political message.

9. Iran Nuclear Program : Is a program of Iran that takes International
attention because Western Countries,
mainly United States and major European
Countries like Britain, France and
Germany, have long been suspecting
Iran of developing nuclear weapons,
and continues to press on Iran to stop the
program.

