

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Semiotics is very important for us to learn because it can help us interpret all forms. Generally we need semiotic in our daily lives. If there is no sign to indicate something we will find it difficult, with this semiotics we as humans will be easier to understand all signs even with difficult signs. In relation to language, without language human beings cannot live and survive in the world, either in the factual world or in the symbolic world (Sudjiman and Zoest, 1991:vii).

The term 'symbolic world' refers to the imaginative world in which the object or reference only exists in the minds of language speakers that is mediated through the use of language as a system of mediation. The use of language in capacity as a system of mediation for human communication is intended not only to uncover their mental image, worldview, and self-perception, but also to construct their vision on socio-cultural reality (Bustan, 2012:1).

Dealing with the symbolic world, the concept of *semiotic* cannot be ignored. Hoed in Ola (2006:37) states that either language or culture, both of them are system of sign. In relation with semiotic, Milner in Ola (2006:37) points out that semiotic is a study of sign and communication through symbols. As cited by Geertz in Bustan (2012:2) that culture is a system, man-created, shared, conventional, ordered, and indeed learned, provide human beings with a meaningful framework for orienting themselves to one another, to the world around them, and to themselves. Therefore, cultural symbols are the research field

of cultural semiotic. Those symbols are not only verbal symbol, but also non-verbal symbol. In short, semiotic brings us to learn and to know the meaning implied behind various objects.

For instance, according to Liliweri (2001:38) Sabunese in East Nusa Tenggara Province indicate *kenana* (betel) and *kelalla* (areca palm) as the symbol of *fingers* and *eyeball* of them. It is the reason of Sabunese always use betel and areca palm in various socio-cultural events as the worship for their ancestors. Besides, Kaho (2005:86) also states that in the traditional wedding process of Sabunese, a bride has to wear *ro d'ara wopudi* (a white slip) that has a *kelale womaddi* (a black grooved) as the base dress. The *white* and *black* colors in cultural semiotic perspective simbolize the *smoothness* and the *obstructions* which will be faced in the household life. Thus, the dress gives some mesagges that as a housband and a wife have to be carefull and believe in *Deo Ama* (Almighty God) as the creator of earth.

Based on the examples above, it can be concluded that *kenana*, *kelalla* and *ro d'ara wopudi do nga kelale womaddi* are not merely physical materials (non-verbal symbols) that have to be used, but rather contain cultural and religious meaning.

In comparison with the examples above, clothes and jewelries used in *Ledo Hawu* also fansion as cultural symbols which belong to Sabunese. *Ledo Hawu* is a war dance that is performed in the ritual of *Tao Leo*. *Tao Leo* is a funeral ceremony that is held especially in the belief of *Jingitiu* as the ancestral religion of Sabunese. It is only held in the death of elder customs. Therefore, in the belief

of *Jingitiu Tao Leo* is the highest level prestige of all funeral ceremony.

Regarding to *Ledo Hawu*, Kaho (2005:24) defines that it is one of traditional dances which belong to Sabunese. In its performance, it consists of men and women that is accompanied by the sounds of gongs and drums with certain rhythms of music. All dancers of *Ledo Hawu* have to wear certain traditional clothes and jewelries as the ancestral properties that are handed down from generation to generation.

In cultural semiotics perspective, the use of those clothes and jewelries is not merely to show the personal ornament of Sabunese, but also contains various cultural meanings. As pointed out by Sudjiman and Zoest (1991:5) that cloth is a popular system of symbol. The way we dress is not only caused of functional considerations (protection of winter and summer). Our dress is symbol or tool of semiotics; by dress we show that “we are strong”, “we are still young”, “we are from Central Java”, “we are women”, “we are modern women”, “we are very interesting women” etcetera. In other words, there are several kinds of meaning implied behind symbols that we use in our socio-cultural life.

Dealing with the use of clothes and jewelries as cultural properties in *Ledo Hawu* is an interesting cultural phenomenon for the writer to conduct a study under the title “*A Descriptive Study of Semiotic of Cloth and Jewelry Worn by Ledo Hawu Dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency*”

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the explanation on the background, the research problems of this research can be formulated as in the following:

1. What are the forms of cloth and jewelry worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency?
2. What are the meanings of cloth and jewelry worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency?

1.3 Aims of Study

Based on those research problems, the aims of this research are presented below:

1. To know the forms of cloth and jewelry worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.
2. To know the meanings of cloth and jewelry worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.

1.4 Significance of Study

It is expectation that the findings of this study are significant in two points of view, they are as followings:

1.4.1 Implication

Theoretically, the research of this kind is supported by the semiotic theory of Pierce (about semiotic that is a study of sign system).

1.4.2 Application

Practically, this study is expected to be useful for:

1. The researcher in enrich and develop her knowledge about the forms and meanings of signs worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.
2. The readers to know the forms and meanings of signs worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.
3. Linguists or cultural observer to enrich their knowledge about the theory of semiotics, especially cultural semiotics of signs worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.
4. Other researchers to get information about cultural semiotics of signs worn by *Ledo Hawu* dancers in Hawu Mehara District, Sabu Raijua Regency.