CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introduction of the study which covers background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, methodology which consists of data collection and data analysis, clarification of key terms and the organization of the study.

1.1   Background of the Study

At the beginning, the term empowerment is used for the poor people because it is about expanding the assets and capabilities for poor people to control their lives (Moser, 2003, as cited in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). It means that empowerment enables people to take more control over their lives and secure a better livelihood. However, nowadays the term empowerment is applicable to many other groups of people, for instance, women, old people, and people with disability.

For women, empowerment also enables them to take control of their own lives and set their own agenda, beside organize to help each other and make demands on the state for support and on the society itself for change (Young, 1993). Related to this, Mayoux (2000) define female empowerment as an effort of individuals for acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential to members of society. Therefore, female empowerment made women able to do these efforts because men are dominant for doing the efforts previously. Hence, women themselves should be the actors in the process of change (Mehra, 1997) to be able to exercise their power.

Female empowerment is the core issue in feminism. This issue happens because there is an inequality between men and women that needs to be stopped since it creates sexism and oppression (hooks, 2000). According to Ratna (2004), women are usually considered as weaker, more passive than men, and positioned as inferior to men. In addition, Millet (as cited in Francis, 2006) explains that women's inferiority is not biologically determined but they are built from and reflected in social expectations and prejudices.

Female empowerment can be expressed in many ways, such as art. In art, female empowerment can be delivered in the form of song. Beyoncé, for example

1

is considered as a singer who often expresses female empowerment in her songs. Beyoncé often creates songs that are often characterized by themes of love, relationships, and monogamy, as well as female sexuality and empowerment (Cubarrubia, n.d.). For instance, in the *Run the World (Girls)* song, Beyoncé packages an empowering feminist message in a pop song casing that indicated through the repetitive lyrics "Who run the world? Girls" that establishes female dominance and empowerment (Jones, 2012). Jones (2012) also adds that Beyoncé has built a succesful musical empire by challenging gender norms with notable songs such as "Irreplaceable", "If I Were a Boy", and "Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It)".

On the other hand, Beyoncé is under study since she is considered as at present one of the most influential female singers in the music industry. According to Strecker (2015) Forbes magazine listed Beyoncé as the most powerful female musician of 2015. This is because as, Trust (2012) states that Beyoncé has sold over 118 million records and making her as one of the best-selling music artists of all time. Based on this influence and the consideration that Beyoncé often expresses female empowerment issue in her songs, this study attempts to discover and investigate whether Beyoncé uses female empowerment issue in her song lyrics.

Lyrics is a text which provides reflection of reality and creates meaning from social phenomena that can aim to entertain or deliver a message as well. In addition, lyrics in song is a significant element as a medium to express the authors' feelings to the listeners or public. The song itself can be sung by others beside the authors.

In this study, song lyrics is analyzed to disclose female empowerment as expressed by Beyoncé by using Semiotics orders of signification which is proposed by Barthes (1957, as cited in Chandler, 2002) in order to reveal the primary signification (denotation) and secondary signification (connotation) of the signs that used in the text analysis through six dimensions of empowerment which is proposed by Malhotra et al. (2002) in the selected Beyoncé's song lyrics. In addition, Do & Kurimoto (2012) state that this framework is one of the most

comprehensive, since the empowerment is measured in several dimensions and at different levels.

1.2 Research Questions

There are two questions that will be answered in this research:

1. What types of female empowerment are constructed in the text?
2. What does the construction of female empowerment mean?

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aims to identify types of female empowerment as proposed by Malhotra et al. (2002) and the meaning of the signified empowerment by using the orders of signification as proposed by Barthes (1957, as cited in Chandler, 2002).

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to discovering and investigating whether female empowerment is represented and signified in the Beyoncé's song lyrics. The study is narrowed into five Beyoncé's songs, which are *Grown Woman* (Music Single, 2013), *If I Were A Boy* (I Am... Sasha Fierce Album, 2009), *Ring Off* (BEYONCÉ Platinum Edition Album, 2014), *Run The World (Girls)* [4 Album, 2011], and ****Flawless* (BEYONCÉ Album, 2013). These songs are selected because they are considered relevant to this study based on the title and lyrics of the songs.

Meanwhile, the dimensions which is proposed by Malhotra et al. (2002) is used since this framework suggests that female empowerment can be examined in six different areas which are economic, sociocultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Moreover, these areas can be examined at the household, community, and broader societal levels by a series of indicators within each category.

1.5 Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to describe and interpret the data, and to investigate how female empowerment is represented and signified in the selected Beyoncé's song lyrics. The description and representation are textually analyzed and interpreted through structures and signs in the lyrics.

The explanation for data collection and data analysis can be seen in the following sections.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data are collected from selected Beyoncé's song lyrics which are *Grown Woman* (music single, 2013), *If I Were A Boy* (I Am... Sasha Fierce Album, 2009), *Ring Off* (BEYONCÉ Platinum Edition Album, 2014), *Run The World (Girls)* [4 Album, 2011], and ****Flawless* (BEYONCÉ Album, 2013). These lyrics are selected because they are indicated to carry female empowerment issues which are similar to Malhotra et al. (2002) dimensions.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

After the data are collected, they are identified for its female empowerment issues that are proposed by Malhotra et al. (2002) to discover types of female empowerment that express on sentences, phrases or words at verse level. Then the sentences, phrases or words which are contain dimensions of female empowerment in the verses are further analyzed by using Barthes (1957, as cited in Chandler, 2002) to see the meaning of the female empowerment construction.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms are clarified as follows:

1. **Lyrics** in this study is language style and deviation meaning of word that reinforced with melody and musical notes which made the listener carried away with the author's thought (Awe, 2003).

2. **Empowerment** in this study is defined as a group's or individual's capacity to make effective choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop, 2006).

3. **Feminism** in this study is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression (Hooks, 2000).

4. **Symbol** in this study is a sign which used in human communication that give words, images, gestures, drawings or mimetic sound (Ogden and Richards, 1923)

5. **Denotation** in this study is defined as definitional, literal, obvious or common sense meaning of a sign (Chandler, 2002).

6. **Connotation** in this study is defined as socio-cultural and personal asociation of a sign (Chandler, 2002).

7. **Beyoncé** in this study refers to a female singer who considered as a feminist through her songs (O'Connor, 2013).

1.7   Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, methodology which consists of data collection and data analysis, clarification of key terms and the organization of the study.

Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

This chapter contains an explanation of the theoretical framework which are orders of signification which is proposed by Barthes (1957, as cited in Chandler, 2002) and Transitivity system which is developed by Halliday (as cited in Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter contains the methods of how to analyze the data provided. The approach will be a descriptive qualitative method.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussions

This chapter contains the result of the study after conducting the study and obtaining the necessary data that is depicted including the analysis of the data using the theoretical framework.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter contains conclusions and suggestions for further study.