

## **An Analysis of Slang Words in Song Lyrics Used by Ariana Grande**

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### **Abstract**

The study was concerned with the slang word in song lyrics. The aims of the study are focused on analyzing the types of slang proposed by the theory of Chapman (2007) and the effect of slang words by the theory by Eble (1996). The method of the research used descriptive qualitative method. The data got from song lyrics by Ariana Grande, the song titles were 34 + 35, Positions, Thank U, Next, and Side to Side. Data were obtained from the data collection through listening to the songs, reading the song, printing the song, underlining words containing the type and effect of slang words, and noting the data. The researcher found 21 (78%) data types of primary slang and 6 (22%) data types of secondary slang. The effects of slang words there are 21 (78%) slang words identified as expressing informality and 6 (12%) slang words identified as identifying group members and no slang found to apposed establishing authority.

**Keywords:** Slang word, type of slang, song

### **Introduction**

Communication is used to tell a person or group of people about information, commands, problems, and other things expressed in a person's thoughts and feelings. According to Forsdale (1981) Communication is the process by which a system is established, maintained, and altered through shared signals that operate according to the rules. The purpose of the theory is communication is a type of process in forming, maintaining, and changing something to ensure that the signal sent conforms to the rules. There are two types of communication, namely internal and external. Internal communication is a type of communication that occurs within the scope of the organization and company. External communication means communication that exists between organizations and communities in various forms. According to Giffin & Patten (1976) communication is the process of creating meaning as well as describing it. It is an exchange of ideas and interactions among group members. When it comes to communication, language choices are also influential. It could be used the formal and informal language.

In essence, language is speech, not writing, which combines sound and meaning. There is no language between symbols, sounds, and meanings. According to Wardhaugh (1972), language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. Because of its arbitrary nature, each group can make its own words or symbols according to their agreement. That is also why every community group, ethnic group or nation has its language so that life is so beautiful. Language can be utilized in both spoken and written form depending on the situation. Someone uses professional and literal wording in a formal context, while someone uses slang as one of informal languages in an informal context.

According to Claire (1990), slang is a term used by people in a social situation where they feel comfortable with their friends. Slang is usually used in a non-formal situation. It can make a conversation become more intimate. Slang term is used in almost all oral languages and is usually used to express people's feelings and creativities. Slang is not only popular in informal daily conversations, but also in a song. Many musicians write using slang words.

A similar study in form of an article was found in an analysis entitled *An Analysis of Slang Language in Song Lyrics Used by "Avril Lavigne"*. The study was done by Saputri W. (2021). The objective of this study is to find out the type and meaning of the slang language in song lyrics used by Avril Lavigne. The data is classified based on word formation processes according to Yule's theory (2010) through qualitative method. There are twelve types of word formation found in this study, there are compounding coinage, blending, clipping, back formation, borrowing, multiple process, acronyms, affixes (prefix, infix, suffix). There are four types of slang language that were identified based on the findings used in Avril Lavigne song lyrics found ten Blending, four Clipping, two Compounding, and one Back Formation. Blending is the most common process that was found in this study.

The second study was taken from an article proposed by Dewi K. and Widiastuti A. (2020). *An Analysis of Slang Words in Song Lyrics Used in the Songs "That's What I Like", "Smoke on the Water", and "Ch-Check It Out"*. The data from this survey was collected from lyrics in three genres: pop, rock and rap. We used documentation techniques to collect the data and qualitative techniques to analyze the data. This study used the theory of the types of slang by Patridge (2004) and the meaning of the slang word used the theory proposed by Geoffrey Leech (1974). The writer found six types of slang words such as four slang words in publicity, four slang words in public School and University, twenty one slang words in society, three slang words in theatre, one soldier's slang, and one public house slang. Then, there are six meanings of slang word are found by the writer such as six in conceptual meaning, five in stylistic meaning, seven in collocative meaning, six and reflected meaning, three in connotative meaning, and four in affective meaning. This study reveals that social slang and colloquial meanings are most commonly found and used in song lyrics.

Another study was written by Puspitorini F. and Narawaty D. (2019) entitled *An Analysis of Slang Word in Song Lyrics Used by "Bruno Mars"*. The purpose of this study is to find out the type and dominant type of slang word in the song lyrics used. The data of this study used five song lyrics by Bruno Mars. Descriptive qualitative method is used to analyze the data of this study by the theory of word formation proposed by George Yule (1986). The writer found five processes of slang-word formation found in the lyrics. The processes of slang word formation that are used in the lyrics are clipping (140%), blending (140%), coinage (140%), borrowing (20%), and acronym (0%).

Therefore, this study is focused on analyzing the type and effect of slang words in song lyrics used by Ariana Grande. There are several compelling reasons for selecting Ariana Grande's songs. For starters, no study has previously examined Ariana Grande's song lyrics; the previous studies ostensibly examined the type of slang word found in the song lyrics, whereas this study examines the type and effect of the slang word in the song lyrics. Furthermore, Ariana Grande's songs are well-known in a number of nations, including Indonesia. Because teenagers frequently use the song's terminology, the lyrics include a lot of slang phrases.

## Theory and Method

### Slang Word

According to Clair (1990) slang is a term that is used by people in social situations where they feel comfortable with their friends. Slang is usually used in non-formal situation. Slang word is used in almost all oral languages and usually expresses people's creativity. Slang often suggests that the person using the word or phrase is familiar with the group of listeners' subgroups. This can be seen as a differentiator for group identity. According to Chapman (2007), there are two types of slang. There are:

#### 1. Primary Slang

According to Chapman (2007) primary slang is the pristine speech of subculture members; it is so natural to its speakers that it seems they might be mute without it. Of course, they would not be, slang is an alternative idiom, which can be an option. Examples of mainstream slang are usually used by young speakers and urban street gangs. What can be detected in contrast is primary slang, and spoken language is often rich, complex, powerful, and uses effectively. For example the word 'gimme' from word 'give me', 'tryna' from word 'trying to', 'put yo' from word 'put your'. Examples of these words are in the primary slang. This type of slang is used to describe what people use in their daily activities and conversations. Or used by rap and hip singers to shorten or change words with different pronunciations. It has nothing to do with a person's personality or a secret.

#### 2. Secondary Slang

According to Chapman (2007) secondary slang is chosen not so much to fix one group but to express one's attitudes toward; agreement and disagreement, and to express someone's contempt, superiority, cleverness by borrowing someone's verbal dress. This slang word is used to express something the secret to the people who understand the meaning of the words. 'mini-me' (someone who looks exactly like you except that they are younger or smaller than you are). Eventually, the users of slang can spread through certain groups of people in society not only the people of the underworld.

### Effect of Slang

Researchers have emphasized different effects, However, the three general effects of slang have been repeatedly emphasized. Slang shifts the level of discourse to express informality, slang identifies members of a group, and slang opposes established authority. These effects are described below:

#### 1. Express Informality

Slang changes the level of discourse towards informality. It differs from broad vocabulary in that it indicates little about the speaker or his or her attitude toward the subject or audience. it contrasts stylistically with a general vocabulary that reveals little about the speakers or the speaker's attitudes toward the subject matter or audience. A slang phrase replaces the neutral term in the second variant, resulting in a less formal sentence. For example: 'Wanna'. Actually, this word comes from the word 'want to' and is usually used in informal situations and everyone knows what this word means (Eble 1996).

#### 2. Group Identification

Slang identifies members of the group. The speakers use slang for creativity with clear intentions but can only be accepted or understood by certain groups. Slang serves to demarcate smaller groups or subcultures within the college student community. Slang not

only provides labels to set subgroups apart from the dominant student culture but also functions within such subgroups to validate and enhance internal solidarity. For example, "honey pie" means 'something sweet'. but can be categorized as a call for people who have closeness and to show affection for example to girlfriends, parents, and friends. This word cannot be used immediately after meeting someone. This term is only understood by certain gangs and communities.

### 3. Opposition To Authority

Slang opposes the established authority. It is most commonly cultivated among people in society who have little political influence, such as adolescents, college students, and military enlisted members, or who have reason to hide what they know or do from people in authority, like gamblers, drug addicts, and prisoners.

Usually, the irreverence of collage slang is targeted at social mores; the opposition to authority consists of breaches of good taste, which are often sexual. For example, the following terms are 'vandal, fraud, rapist'.

## Method

The data source of this research was taken from several songs by Ariana Grande. This study used four songs, the song titles were 34 + 35, Positions, Thank U, Next, and Side to Side. 34+35 is the second track on Ariana Grande's sixth studio album, Positions (2020). Republic Records released Positions on October 23, 2020 as the lead single for Grande's sixth studio album of the same name. Thank U, Next was released on November 3, 2018. This song serves as the lead single from her fifth studio album of the same name (2019). Side to Side is a song from Grande's third studio album "Dangerous Woman" (2016).

The data was collected by observation method. There were four steps in collecting the data. First, listened to the songs using the Spotify application. Second, read from the website aims to catch the lyrics of every song by Ariana Grade. Third, underlined the word in song lyrics which slang type and effect were found based on the theory. Fourth, take a note of the data found by entering it into the table. The data in this research was analyzed using descriptive qualitative method. The data were analyzed in the following steps such as identified the type of slang word followed by analyzing the effect of each slang word found.

## Findings and Discussion

This research showed the data found in song lyrics by Ariana Grande can be divided into two slang types, which are primary slang and secondary slang. As for the effect of slang words. The data is tabulated as follows:

Table 1: Types of Slang Word in Song Lyric by Ariana Grande

No	Types of Slang	Total Data	Percentage
1	Primary	21	78 %
2	Secondary	6	22 %
<b>Total</b>		27	100 %

From the table of data above, the type of data could be classified into primary and secondary slang. Primary slang was the type that most commonly appeared, 21 slang words (78%) and secondary slang are found 6 slang words (22%). Primary slang is dominantly more than secondary slang because this data using slang that alwis ays used by people in their daily conversation to make it easier to be understood by the listener.

Table 2: The Effect of Slang Word in Song Lyric by Ariana Grande

No	Effect of Slang	Total Data	Percentage
1	Express Informality	21	78 %
2	Identify Group Member	6	22 %
<b>Total</b>		27	100 %

From the table of data above, it could be concluded that were only two effects of slang, found namely expressing informality and identifying group members. Express informality is the effect that has been most found with 21 slang words (78%) and then identify group member 6 data (22%) there is no slang word with oppose established authority effect. The slang was mostly to express informality because Ariana Grande made song lyrics to easily understand the listeners. Express informality occurred dominantly because slang word that is used in this data actually want to show intimately because informality creates more intimate relation and closer to each other.

From those two tables above, the result of primary slang words and the effect of slang words are found in all song lyrics by Ariana Grande, entitled 34+35, Positions, Thank U, Next, and Side to Side. Meanwhile, the result of secondary slang words and the effect of slang words are only found in the song lyrics by Ariana Grande, entitled 34+35 and Side to Side.

According to Chapman (2007) primary slang is the pristine speech of subculture members; it is so natural to its speakers that it seems they might be mute without it. Secondary slang is used to express something secret to the people who understand the meaning of the words. The explanation of primary and secondary slang as do the effect are presented below.

#### Data 1

*You Might think I'm crazy*  
*The way I've been cravin' (In song 34+35, line 2)*

*Cravin'* on this lyric means conveying a desire for something. The speaker of the word *cravin'* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl is obsessed with a boy and makes the boy think the woman is crazy. And according to Slang Dictionary, *cravin'* means great or eager desire. The meaning of this lyric is someone who is very obsessed with the person she loves and always craves for it. Therefore, this data could be identified as primary slang.

This data also could be categorized as an express informality because this shortening from original world craving, it does not relate to any identification of a specific street gang member only, instead, it is a stylistic choice of a person in speaking in an informal situation and this slang could be understood and used by most people in society.

#### Data 2

*If put it quite planly*  
*Just gimme them babies (In song 34+35, line 4)*

*Gimme* means "give me" but nowadays shorten become *gimme*. The speaker of the word *gimme* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl wants to clearly tell her boyfriend when she is heterosexual and that she might want her partner to come (ejaculate or finish) inside of her. And according to Slang Dictionary, *gimme* means "give me". The meaning of this lyric is having sex with a desire to creampie her.

This word could be identified as primary slang and can be identified as an express informality because this word is very often used to communicate or interact with many people, which the meaning of the word everybody already knows. This word is not only used in oral but also in writing, such as text or chat or messages or write captions in social media.

### Data 3

*So what you doin' tonight ?  
Better say, "Doin' you right" yeah (In song 34+35, line 5)*

*Doin'* means "doing". The speaker of the word *Doin'* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl asks her boyfriend what are you going to do tonight? And this girl said that it was better to do the sure thing. And according to Slang Dictionary, *Doin'* is shortening from originally word *Doing*. The meaning of this lyric is to do something useful in a negative.

It can be identified as primary slang and can be identified as an express informality because this word is often used when you are working on something. Which is the meaning of the word everybody already knows.

### Data 4

*I don't wanna keep you up (You up)  
But show me, can you keep it up? (It up) (In song 34+35, line 8)*

*Wanna* can be identified as primary slang and can be defined as express informality because this word is usually used in writing form or speaking directly to show the informal pronunciation of "want to". The speaker of the word *Wanna* is a girl. In this lyric, talking about an erect penis. Sexual intercourse will occur if the penis of the man is hard or up. And this girl asks if her boyfriend's penis will stay hard for a long time. And according to Slang Dictionary, *Wanna* is short to *want to*. *Wanna* is frequently used in daily conversation in informal situations, especially American English and this word is also widely used in social media in an informal format.

### Data 5

*I've been drinking coffee  
And I've been eating healthy  
Know I keep it squeaky, yeah (In song 34+35, line 14)*

The literal meaning of the word squeak is to make a high-pitched sound. In Song 34 + 35, the meaning of this word is an expression of excitement and enthusiasm that cannot be contained. The speaker of the word squeak is a girl. This text means that the girl drank coffee and ate healthily. This helps sexual intercourse without feeling tired.

This word can be categorized as primary slang and express informality because this word is commonly used by English people when they interact with other people in informal situations.

### Data 6

*Baby, you might need a seatbelt when I ride it (In song 34+35, Line 42)*

*Baby* literally means "newborn or recently born". The word baby can be imagined when "baby" comes across as funny, sweet and adorable. In this text, baby means calling someone we love, such as boyfriend or girlfriend, parent or best friend. The speaker of the

word baby is a girl. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a baby means "a very young child." This text means that the girl tells her boyfriend to use a condom during sex.

*Baby* can be identified as primary slang and express informality because this word is used by a person who you love and want to call with an endearment name as in the word *baby* that full of affection.

#### Data 7

*Boy, I'm tryna meet your Mama on a Sunday*  
*Then make a lotta love on a Monday* (In song Position, Line 4)

*Lotta* a shortened form of "lot of" or "lots of". The word *lotta* means a large amount or number of something. The speaker of the word *Lotta* is a girl. This lyric means a girl who has a good job, and is very busy with her work but still makes a schedule to meet her boyfriend's mother and give her lots of love and care every day. According Oxford Dictionary "*Lotta*" is a shortened form of "lot of" or "lots of" that shows how it sounds in informal speech.

This word can be identified as primary slang and express informality because English speakers often reduced some words to make it easier to pronounce when they are communicating with other people in informal situations.

#### Data 8

*I've been here all day*  
*And boy, got me walkin' sie to side*  
*(Let them hoes know)* (In song Side to Side, Line 4)

The meaning of the word *hoes* itself refers to one of the gardening tools. But in this song, the literal meaning of this word is "whore". In Routledge Dictionary, the word "whore" means "a sexually available woman, or a woman who may be considered sexually available and a prostitute. The meaning in this lyric is a girl who is attracted to a guy at the gym, and she is at the gym every day hoping to get the attention of the guy she likes and wants all the women there to know that she like one of the guys at the gym.

"*Hoes*" could be identified as primary slang and express informality because this word is usually used when someone is showing unpleasantness about someone else and it can be used when talking with someone or in a message and social media.

#### Data 9

*I know they say I move on too fast*  
*But this gon' last*  
*'Cause her name is Ari*" (In song Thank U, Next, Line 31)

*Gon'* means "Gone". The speaker of the word *Gon'* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl tells about failure in dating. And many of her friends say that she is too fast to forget her ex, but she assures it is the last one who will not go is Ari. Ari is the singer of this song, Ariana Grande, so the one who will not be leaving is herself. According to Cambridge Dictionary *Gon'* means "Gone".

The word *Gon'* could be identified as primary slang and express informality because it is very often used in daily conversation by most people who speak English in informal situations.

**Data 10**

*Can you stay up all night?  
Fuck me 'till the daylight  
Thirty-four, thirty-five (In song 34+35, line 18)*

*Thirty-four, thirty-five* have literal meaning “*just a number*”. In fact, this number 34+35 is sexual pose, which is 69. 69 is a sexual pose that a couple makes while in love. The speaker of the word ‘*Thirty-four, thirty-five*’ is a girl. In this lyric, a girl who wants to having sex all night with the pose she likes is 69. Songwriters use the word *Thirty-four, thirty-five* to reduce the use of vulgar words.

The word *thirty-four, thirty-five* could be identified as secondary slang and identify group members because it has a secret meaning or the code and only certain people understood the meaning of the word. Usually, these words are used by a group or gang where all members of the group already know the meaning of the word.

**Data 11**

*Baby, you might need a seatbelt when I ride it  
I'ma leave it open like a door, come inside it (In song 34+35, line 42)*

*Ride* means “*sitting on the back of an animal and moving*”. In this song, *Ride* means the act of being on top of a horse when it is moving while it is having sexual intercourse. The speaker of the word *Thirty-four, thirty-five* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl will control this sex game which means the position during sex of a girl is on top of a man, like riding a horse. According to Oxford Dictionary, *ride* means “*to sit on an animal, especially a horse and control it as movies.*”

The word *Ride* could be identified as secondary slang and identify a member group because this is an expression that is only used and understood by specific people gangs or communities. The meaning of this word is usually very rarely used and known by many people. This word can be used with couples or close friends who already know each other the meaning of the word.

**Data 12**

*Baby, you might need a seatbelt when I ride it  
I'ma leave it open like a door, come inside it (In song 34+35, line 42)*

The word *seatbelt* means “*tools used while driving to stay safe*”. In this song, *seatbelt* means the man has to prepare a condom because the woman will move her body like riding a horse on top of the man's body. The speaker of the word *Seatbelt* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl reminds her boyfriend to use a condom before having sex. According to Oxford Dictionary, *seatbelt* means “*a belt attached to the seat in a car or plane and that you fasten around yourself so that you are not thrown out of the seat if there is an accident*”.

This word could identify as secondary slang and identify member group because these words are usually used by people who feel comfortable with their boyfriend or girlfriend and not everyone understands the meaning of these words. That is not appropriate for everyone to use especially teenagers, this word is only part of people who use it or a group member already knows the meaning of the word.



### Data 13

*Bee here all night*

*And boy, got me walkin' side to side (In song Side to Side, line 31)*

*Side to side* has literal meaning “objects that move left or right move from left to right, then from right to left and then back again”. Actually, in this song, *side to side* means that she is not able to walk straight after having sexual intercourse for a long time. The speaker of the word *side to side* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl has been waiting and very excited to have sex and asks a man to make her difficult to walk.

These words could be classified as secondary slang and identify member group because most people rarely use this expression especially teenagers because this word has a quite vulgar meaning and also not everyone will know the meaning.

### Data 14

*This the new style with the fresh type of flow*

*Wrist icicle, ride dick bicycle (In song Side to Side, line 36)*

*Wrist icicle* has literal meaning “when you have shiny wrist jewelry, which are: watches, bracelets, etc. usually a diamond crust”. Actually, in this song, *wrist icicle* contains a meaning that a man cum on someone’s wrist and it drips.

These words could be classified as secondary slang and identify member group because this type of expression can be considered a secret and not everyone knows the meaning of this word, so people usually use it to talk to someone who also understands the meaning of this word.

### Data 15

*I’m a leave it open like a door, come inside it*

*Even though I’m wifey, you can hit it like a side chick (In song 34+35, line 44)*

*Side chick* usually means a woman who has a secret relationship with someone who is already in a loyal relationship. This word is another name for “a mistress”. The name comes from the small chicken position like a side dish next to the main course, or not the “main chicken” which means wife or girlfriend. The speaker of the words *Side chick* is a girl. In this lyric, a girl tells her man to treat her like his mistress during sexual intercourse even though she is his wife.

*Side chick* could be classified as secondary slang and identify member group because they usually use this word only to speak to someone who understands its meaning. Not many people know this term, only a group know the meaning of this slang.

## Conclusion

After the analysis, it could be concluded that there are two types of slang in this song, namely primary slang and secondary slang. Primary slang word type was the most commonly found which is 21 (78%). Secondary slang word type is usually used to keep the degree of secrecy between certain groups and communities was found 6 (22%). The primary slang occurred dominantly because this data is always used by people in their daily conversation to make it easier to be understood by the listeners.

There are two types of the effect of slang words, namely, expressing informality and identifying as a group member, the oppose establish authority type is not found in this song. In this study, the effects of slang words there are 21 (78%) slang words identified as

expressing informality and 6 (22%) slang words identify as identified as group member and no slang found to oppose establish authority. Express informality occurred dominantly because in this data actually want to show intimately because informality creates more intimate relation and closer each others.

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