

**ANALYSIS OF TABOO WORDS IN ARIANA GRANDE'S *POSITION*
ALBUM**

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ABSTRACT

Taboo words are one of the words used by society and are also found in music because nowadays many songs use bad words or taboo words in every song. This research entitled Analysis of Taboo Words in Ariana Grande's Position Album. The researcher used descriptive qualitative methodology and the sociolinguistics theory of Battistella (2005) to analyze the type, and Wardhaugh (2006) to analyze the function. The data obtained totaled 19 data and collected using non-participant observation technique and note taking technique procedures by Sudaryanto (2015). In addition, for the data analysis process, identity method was used in this research.

The result of this research shows that there are four types of taboo words found in Position album. The four types are epithet (5 data), profanity (3 data), vulgarity (4 data), and obscenity (7 data). In addition, there are also four functions of taboo words found are to draw attention to oneself (6 data), to show contempt (8 data), to be provocative (5 data), and to mock authority (1 data).

Keywords: Taboo Words, Sociolinguistics, Position Album

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is all forms of communication in which a person's thoughts

and feelings are symbolized to convey meaning to the others. Moreover, According to Genelti (2014) language is a means of communication between one individual and other. Language is formed through a variety of systems. According O'Grady and Archibald (2016) Language is a sound system sign that serves as a crucial component in human life as a means of communicating thoughts, messages, intentions, and opinions to others, humans would be unable to communicate with others if language did not exist.

The study of language is called Linguistic. According to Martinet (1987) linguistic is the study which takes language as an object, how it is put together and how it functions. Sociolinguistics is one of the many fields of linguistics. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between society and language, it examines how people use language in social contexts. As is common knowledge, language has a relationship to society and just like what have been said by Hickerson (1980) stated that sociolinguistics is a growing branch of linguistics that examines how speech variation relates to society, and Hudson (1980) defined sociolinguistics as the study of language with society. We study language and society in sociolinguistics in order to understand as much as we can about what language is. The subject of sociolinguistics has many different aspects, one of which is Taboo words.

One word that people use is the word "Taboo." Words that are prohibited cannot be used in specific contexts. Because bad language is associated with taboo words. According to Trudgill (2000) taboo is associated with things which are not said, and in particular with words and expressions which are not used. It indicates that a few words are considered taboo and should not be used in every situation. In other words, a taboo word that is typically only used in informal situations. Because of their negative connotations, taboo words have a powerful effect. People who heard that can feel embarrassed or even insulted.

Many taboo words can also be found in music. Almost all people enjoy music or songs because they have the power to make people feel happy or sad and because so many people take the time to play and listen to them.

As defined by (Longman, 1982) a song is a short piece of music with words for singing. Because the song is a way for people to convey their feelings about something, it is very relatable to humans. In addition, we all know, music and songs have meanings and we may learn from them what is being discussed. However, many songs today use bad or taboo words in every single song.

The researcher wants to analyze some of the song in Ariana Grande's album Position. This album Position tells the story of Ariana Grande's life explained by taboo words. Researchers will analyze all the songs in that album. Positions is the sixth studio album by American singer Ariana Grande. The album was released on October 30, 2020 through Republic Records. The album 'Positions' contains romantic and sensual songs with a personal touch from Ariana. On the first day of release (October 30, 2020), 14 tracks from the album 'Positions' made it into the 'United States Top 50' chart and the title single Positions sat at number 1 on the Billboard 100 chart. It was noted that Ariana Grande's album was the first US singer to have all the songs from her album enter the charts.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research method is an important way for researcher to collect the data presented. The method of this research is divided into three parts, namely data and source of data, method, and technique of collecting data, then method and technique in analyzing data. To analyze the data, researchers use descriptive qualitative methodologies.

1. Data and Source of the Data

The researcher obtained the data source from Ariana Grande's Position album which consists of 14 songs and the data obtained totaled 19 data. The data will be examined in this study are words and phrases of Ariana Grande's position album song lyrics entitled (1) *SHUT UP*, (2) *34-35*, (3) *MOTIVE*, (4) *JUST LIKE*

MAGIC, (5) *OFF THE TABLE*, (6) *SIX THIRTY*, (7) *SAFETY NET*, (8) *MY HAIR*, (9) *NASTY*, (10) *WEST SIDE*, (11) *LOVE LANGUAGE*, (12) *POSITION*, (13) *OBVIOUS*, and (14) *POV*. In addition, words and phrases from the album lyrics were also taken as data. The researcher used 14 songs in the album to get more data to analyze the types and functions of taboo words. The song lyrics were taken from the official website www.genius.com.

2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

Method of collecting data is method to gain the data related to the research. There are two methods of collecting data namely observation method and interview method (Sudaryanto, 1993). In this research, researcher used the observation method to analyze the data. The basic technique of this method is *Teknik sadap* (Tapping Technique) and the advance techniques are *Teknik Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (Non-Participant Observation Technique) and *Teknik Catat* (Noting Technique).

In collecting data, the researcher employed *Teknik Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (Non-Participant Observation Technique) and *Teknik Catat* (Note Taking Technique) proposed by Sudaryanto (2015). According to Sudaryanto (2015), *Teknik Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* is a technique where the researcher only as an observer while *Teknik Catat* is the following technique that notes the observational data of the conversation. In collecting the data, the researcher used several steps:

1. Preparing and search then listening and download the song's lyrics from the official website www.genius.com.
2. Collecting the data, in this process the collected song's lyrics by Ariana Grande from album *Position* and print the lyrics.
3. Reading the lyrics on the official website which contain taboo words.
4. Identifying the words and phrases which contain taboo words on the song lyrics.

3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

Sudaryanto (2015) explains that there are two methods of data analysis namely *Metode Padan* (Identity method) and *Metode Agih* (Agih method). Identity method is a method that is used to determine the identity of linguistic unit which the determiner tool is outside apart and not become the part of language (langue) concerned. While *Metode Agih* is a method in which the determiner tools are inside the language itself.

In this research the researcher used the identity method (*Metode Padan*) to analyze the data because one of the research objectives was to analyze the types and functions of the use of taboo words in Ariana Grande's *Position* album. The researcher analyzes the data through several steps as follows:

- a. Identifying the use of taboo words and phrases in Ariana Grande's *Position* album.
- b. Analyzing the types of the taboo words that is found in Ariana Grande's lyrics using Battistella (2005) theory.
- c. Analyzing the function of taboo words that is found in Ariana Grande's lyrics using Wardhaugh (2006) theory.
- d. Drawing a conclusion from the data analysis.

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

A. Finding

Based on data analysis about taboo words in Ariana Grande's *Position* album, the researcher can find by analytical methods yields a total of 19 data collected in this study. The data is displayed in a data analysis table. This table shows the frequency of occurrence of types and functions of the taboo words in the album. The results from 19 data number, the researcher found types and function of taboo words in that album. There are four types of taboo words, i.e epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. And there are four functions of taboo words, i.e to draw attention, to show contempt, to be provocative, and to mock authority.

B. The Types of Taboo Words in Ariana Grande's Position Album

After learning about the data on the album Position, the researcher tries to spread the study of the data. The analysis of taboo words in Ariana Grande's song lyrics from the album Position. The Battistella (2005) Theory's categorized of taboo words. The category is based on taboo word including epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. Using Wardaugh's theory, the researcher examines how taboo words are used for purposes including draw attention to oneself, show contempt, be provocative, and mock authority. The categorization of the taboo words types and functions will be discussed in the following explanation.

The album Position contains four different categories of taboo words taken from Battistella, those are epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. Each one will be thoroughly discussed in the following discussion.

a. Epithet

According to Battistella (2005) Epithet are various types of slurs, such as wop, raghead, bitch, or faggot. Usually these refer to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, but they can also refer to appearance, disability, or other characteristics. Battistella gives examples as midget, gimp, and retard (Battistella, 2005). It is typically directed at any object or another person and driven by irritation or rage. The words **"So Dumb, Crazy, and Bitch"** appears sometimes in the lyric album of *Position*. The word "so dumb" appears in the lyrics, the examples can be shown below. The researcher highlighted a few things below.

1) So Dumb (Datum 1)

"You be so worried bout mine"

"Can't even get yourself none"

"You know you sound so dumb"

In the part of song lyrics in Ariana Grande's Position album above, it explains Ariana Grande's feelings towards her interlocutor. The lyrics "you be so worried about mine" explain that the figure described

in the song takes care of everything about Ariana, then continued with the lyrics "can't even get yourself none" which means that the figure doesn't take care of himself because he is too worried or interferes with other people's affairs, then continued with the lyrics "you know you sound so dumb" explaining the expression of emotions described through the lyrics of the song that everything the figure in the song does is just nonsense, so Ariana called him "so dumb". The three parts of the song lyrics describe someone who spends his time trying to interfere with other people's affairs and talking too much so that the epithet "so dumb" is conveyed by Ariana to someone she refers to in the lyrics of the song.

As described by Battistella (2005) epithets are various types of slurs, the word "so dumb" is included in the type of taboo word epithet. The word was expressed as a feeling of anger and an expression of emotion. The word "so" is a word used to strengthen an adjective or noun, while the word "dumb" in terms is lacking in intelligence or good judgment or is stupid and lacks the power of speech. So the word "so dumb" in the song lyrics above is an emphasizing sentence used by Ariana in the song to express her emotions.

b. Profanity

According to Battistella (2005) profanity can be categorized as religious cursing because it usually includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred. Profanity happens when someone make use of religious vocabulary like *Jesus Christ*, *hell*, *damn*, and *God* in a profane manner. While the word is used politely, the speaker does not mean to disrespect God or anything else religious. The speaker's intention is for conveying an emotional response to a specific stimulus. In Ariana Grande's Position Album, the profanities used in the song lyrics are *demons*, *hell*, and *damn*. Three observations about the use of profanity in album Position are drawn from the explanation.

The lyrics album contains the word “Hell” in it. It can be seen below.

1) *Hell* (Datum 7)

“Love the game so I ain’t never miss”

“Keep opinions muted for the *hell* of it”

“Cause I like my shit”

The song lyrics above talk about how Ariana loves and is in control of the game she plays with someone and has the freedom to have an opinion so she lets many opinions be muted because she prefers her own opinion to be in control of the game. In the lyrics "Love the game so I ain't never miss" explains if Ariana likes the game so she never misses to play it, then in the lyrics "Keep opinions muted for the hell of it" explains if she muted various opinions on the game being played, then continued with the lyrics "Cause I like my shit" which emphasizes if she muted various opinions because she only likes her own opinion or nonsense.

As explained by Batistella (2005), profanity is categorized as taboo words in religion, where the word "Hell" in the song lyrics above includes profanity or taboo words from words that are considered sacred or lead to religion. The intention of the lyrics "Keep opinions muted for the hell of it" is not to disrespect God or anything related to religion. The real intention is to express an emotional reaction to a certain stimulus. The following sample provides another.

c. *Vulgarity*

Vulgarity is different from the other two types above because it refers to words or expressions which characterize sex-differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory functions in a crude way, such as shit and fuck (Battistella, 2005). Vulgarity is believed to denote a crude expression of street language. Therefore, the use of vulgar

language is usually to humiliate or put down the object or individual in question.

Based on the explanation above there are 4 data found in the album *Position*. The words "*Side chick, Side dick, Pussy*" appears in the lyrics album of *Position*. The word "Pussy" appears in the lyrics, it can be seen below.

1) *Pussy* (Datum 12)

"I just wanna make time for ya" (Yeah)

"Swear it's just right for ya"

"Like this *pussy* designed for ya" (Yeah)

The lyrics of this song describe a person who only wants to spend time with his lover, he swears that he is doing this so that he can make love to his lover. In the lyrics "I just wanna make time for ya" explains that the figure referred to as "I" just wants to make time for his lover, then continues in the lyrics "Swear it's just right for ya" emphasizes that he really means it, then in the lyrics "Like this pussy designed for ya" explains if he is ready to serve his lover. Based on the lyrics above, the word "pussy" in the lyrics "Like this pussy is designed for you" means the discovery of the taboo word "pussy", which can mean "human vulva or vagina" and more rarely, means "sexual intercourse with women". As described by Battistella (2005), The term "vulgarity" refers to bad-mannered use of phrases or idioms that contain sexual anatomy. Therefore, according to the lyrics above, the word "pussy" refers to a body part.

d. **Obscenity**

Obscenity is described as a term that characterizes sex-differentiated anatomy or sexual function and excretion in a crude way, such as fuck and shit (Battistella, 2005). Obscenity and vulgarity have similar references but they are different. The

difference between vulgarity and obscenity is related to the level of modesty. Obscenity is believed to be forbidden to use in public because it involves disgust to the senses, is repulsive, disrespectful, and disgusting to morality.

Position album's use of obscenity is indicated by four facts from the aforementioned explanation. The word "fuckin" appears sometimes in the song lyrics. It can be seen below. The researcher will explain the appearance of the word fuckin on the explanation below.

1) *Shit* (Datum 14)

"Shit maybe I'ma keep you up boy"

The lyrics of the song contain the word shit which according to Batistela (2005) the word shit is related to obscenity, because the word is related to sexual activity involving one or more people in expressing their sexuality. In the lyrics "Shit I'ma keep you up boy" explains that Ariana has to stay up all night for her lover, the word "shit" is used as an expression of her annoyance at her lover. Based on the lyrics above, there is a taboo word "shit" in the lyrics "Shit I'ma keep you up boy", and the word "shit" falls into the type of obscenity.

As explained by Battistella (2005), obscenity and vulgarity have similar but different references. The difference between vulgarity and obscenity is related to the level of modesty. So the taboo word "shit" is included in the obscenity type because of course the word "shit" is a word that is believed to be prohibited to be used in public because it is impolite.

C. Function of Taboo Words in Ariana Grande's Position Album

After analyzing the types of taboo words, the researcher investigated

the functions of the taboo words by using Wardhaugh's (2006) theory. The four purposes of taboo words according to Wardhaugh (2006) are to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative and to mock authority. The explanation of each is followed by some examples.

a. To Draw Attention to Oneself

According to Wardhaugh (2006) sometimes people utter taboo words in order to get the attention from the listener. The speakers should gain the interest through the use of strong, powerful language whose connotation can stimulate an instant reaction from the audience. As a result, people choose taboo words that, due to their powerful connotations, are thought to have the ability to capture the attention of listeners. Here are some instances of how to draw attention to oneself. The researcher has underlined the words.

1) *Bitch* (Datum 4)

“You such a dream come true”

“Make a *bitch* wanna hit snooze, ooh”

The lyrics above mean that Ariana says that her boyfriend is like a dream come true and followed by the lyrics "make a bitch wanna hit snooze" which explains that she wants to hit the alarm button because she doesn't want to wake up from her sleep. In the line above, the taboo word "bitch" categorized into the function to draw attention to oneself, which means Ariana wants everyone to notice her with a taboo word that has strong connotations. As Wardhaugh (2006) explains, speakers should draw attention through the use of strong and powerful language whose connotations can stimulate instant reactions from the audience. The next example can be seen below.

b. To Show Contempt

According to Wardhaugh (2006) the use of taboo words in conversation between two people can also mean to show contempt. The impression in which a person or may be something is totally

useless and cannot be regarded. In other words, when someone tries to show contempt by using taboo words, he or she will insult the addressee by uttering words that can offend their pride. Three examples of this function are provided below, with each one's explanation provided in turn to help clarify the definition. The word “**So dumb**” shows in the lyric album Position. It can be seen below.

1) So Dumb (Datum 1)

“You be so worried bout mine”

“Can’t even get yourself none”

“You know you sound *so dumb*”

The lyrics “*you be so worried about mine*” explain that the figure described in the song takes care of everything about Ariana, then continued with the lyrics “*can't even get yourself none*” which means that the figure doesn't take care of himself because he is too worried or interferes with other people's affairs, then continued with the lyrics “*you know you sound so dumb*” explaining the expression of emotions described through the lyrics of the song that everything the figure in the song does is just nonsense, so Ariana called him “so dumb”. The three parts of the song lyrics describe someone who spends his time trying to interfere with other people's affairs and talking too much so the taboo word “so dumb” is conveyed by Ariana to someone she refers to in the lyrics of the song. In the lyrics “You know you sound so dumb”, the word “so dumb” in the lyrics has a function to show contempt and worthlessness. The taboo words above can also hurt someone's feelings and are very disrespectful.

c. To be Provocative

When someone utters taboo words, he or she may have an intention to provoke a certain response such as violation or anger from others (Wardhaugh, 2006). Verbal obscenity can be the most efficient symbolic process offered to protester intended for inviting chaotic

reaction. Taboo words are considered successful when the response is suitable with the speaker's expectation. The following data illustrates how the function of to be provocative might be used.

1) *Shut up* (Datum 17)

“You know you sound so dumb”

“So maybe you should *shut up*”

The song lyrics mean that Ariana told her interlocutor that what she said was stupid and it was better to keep quiet than to speak. The song lyrics "you know you sound so dumb" explaining the expression of emotions described through the lyrics of the song that everything the figure in the song does is just nonsense, then continued on the lyrics "So maybe you should shut up" explaining that rather than a lot of dumb-sounding nonsense coming out, it's better to just shut up. Based on the song lyrics above "shut up" in the lyrics "You know you sound so dumb" and "So maybe you should shut up" shows that she said the word "shut up" to provoke a response from her interlocutor. The taboo word "shut up" is categorized as a to be provocative. As Wardhaugh (2006) explains, when someone utters taboo words, he or she may have an intention to provoke a certain response such as violation or anger from others.

d. To Mock Authority

According to Battistella (2005) people used taboo words because they want to express their disappointment about reality that are different from what they have expected. As a result, some people may prefer to use specific taboo words that mocking authority in order to demonstrate their distrust in governmental matters. Below are some instances of song lyrics that illustrate the function of mocking authority.

1) *Fuck it* (Datum 16)

“But I get tired of runnin’”

“*Fuck it*, now I'm runnin' with you “

Based on the song lyrics above, the word "fuck it" in the lyrics "But I get tired of runnin" and "Fuck it, now I'm runnin' with you" shows that he said the word "fuck it" to mock and express his frustration. The lyrics above mean that "I'm tired of running but why do I have to run with you now?". In addition, the word "fuck it" in the lyrics above is not meant to mock authority, but the word "fuck it" tries to express his feelings.

CONCLUSION

In this research, researcher found 19 data based on data analysis. For types of taboo words, there are four types of taboo words in Ariana Grande's *Position* Album consist of epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and the last is obscenity. The types of taboo words found are epithet (5 data), profanity (3 data), vulgarity (4 data), and obscenity (7 data). Furthermore, Ariana Grande's *Position* Album uses more obscenity. The researcher concludes from the description above that although the researcher uses various prohibited words, and the type of obscenity dominates the data of the present research.

In term of function, there are four function of taboo words in Ariana Grande's *Position* Album consist of to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative, and to mock authority. The function of taboo words found are to draw attention to oneself (6 data), to show contempt (8 data), to be provocative (5 data), and to mock authority (1 data). In conclusion, Ariana Grande uses a lot of taboo word functions to show contempt in the *Position* album. The researcher also found out how taboo words are used. Most often, show contempt is dominant.

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