

AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL SEMANTICS IN THE SONG LYRICS OF '7 RINGS' BY ARIANA GRANDE

Fathur Ramadhan, Ade Surista, Elsan Arvian
English Literature Study Program, STBA JIA

fathurramadhan245@gmail.com, ade.s@stba_jia.ac.id, elsan.a@stba-jia.ac.id

Abstract

This study analyzes the lexical semantics found in the song lyrics of "7 Rings" by Ariana Grande, focusing on the semantic meanings of luxury-related vocabulary, especially the expressions "black card" and "diamonds." Using the framework of semantic fields and supported by Wierzbicka's (1990) explanation of the conceptual meaning behind color terms, this research explains how *black* and *diamond-related* words symbolize exclusivity and high economic value. A qualitative descriptive method was used to collect, identify, and interpret the lexical items in the lyrics. The analysis shows that "black card" represents exclusivity, prestige, and restricted access, while "diamonds" symbolize extreme luxury and high expense. These findings demonstrate how color terms and material names in modern pop music construct meanings of wealth, self-empowerment, and identity. This research contributes to a better understanding of how semantic fields function in song lyrics and how singers use vocabulary to express social values.

Keywords : lexical semantics, semantic fields, color terms, exclusivity, luxury vocabulary, black cards, diamonds, empowerment, Ariana Grande

Article History

Received: Juli 2026
Reviewed: Juli 2026
Published: Juli 2026
Plagirism Checker: No
235.223.443

Copyright : Author
Publish by : Argopuro



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Introduction

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of human feelings and experiences. One of the most interesting ways to explore language use is through song lyrics. Songwriters often use words creatively to express emotions, ideas, and experiences that are sometimes difficult to describe in ordinary speech. According to (Leech, 1981), semantics is the study of meaning in language, and lexical semantics focuses on the meaning of words and the relationships between them. Meanwile, (Lyons, 1977) explains that words do not have

meaning in isolation, but they gain meaning through their connection and contrast with other words in a system. (Cruse, 2000) further explains that lexical semantics examines how lexical items organize meaning through semantic relations such as synonymy, polysemy, antonymy, and semantic fields. This perspective helps explain how words in song lyrics contribute to the construction of meaning beyond their literal definitions. Therefore, studying lexical semantics helps us understand how meaning is constructed in texts such as song lyrics.

One important concept in lexical semantics is the **semantic field**, which refers to a group of words related to a certain idea or topic (Nilsen & Palmer, 1976). Similarly, (Hurford R. et al., 2007) argue that meaning is understood through the relationships among lexical items within a language system. They emphasize that semantic analysis is not limited to dictionary definitions but also considers how words interact with one another in context. This view supports the analysis of luxury-related vocabulary in the lyrics of "7 Rings". For example words such as "money," "diamond," and "luxury" belong to the same semantic field because they are all related to wealth. In Ariana Grande's song "*7 Rings*", the lyrics use many words about wealth, luxury, and self-confidence. These word choices show how the singer builds a meaning of empowerment and independence through language. This song was chosen because its lyrics contain repetition of luxury-related vocabulary that reflects consumer culture and self-empowerment, making it linguistically rich for lexical semantic analysis.

Previous studies have also explored lexical semantics in song lyrics. For example, (Kendong et al., 2023), studied the use of lexical semantics in Taylor Swift's songs and found that vocabulary choice reflects emotional experiences and identity. (Istama et al., 2024) analyzes the metaphors found in selected songs by James Arthur using semantic analysis. The researchers identify different types of metaphors and explain how figurative language conveys emotions, experiences, and meanings in the lyrics. The findings show that metaphors play an important role in expressing abstract concepts and enhancing the emotional impact of the songs. However, there are still few studies focusing on Ariana Grande's songs, especially "*7 Rings*", which is rich in symbolic language and lexical meaning.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the lexical semantics in the song lyrics of "*7 Rings*" by Ariana Grande. It focuses on identifying the main semantic fields and explaining how word choice creates the song's overall meaning. The findings are expected to help readers understand how meaning is built through vocabulary and how modern pop songs use language to express ideas of self-empowerment and identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method because the data consist of words and phrases taken from the song lyrics “*7 Rings*” by Ariana Grande. According to (Sandelowski, 2000), qualitative descriptive research aims to produce a comprehensive summary of events using everyday language. Researchers who apply this method stay close to the data and focus on the surface meaning of words in order to provide a direct and clear description of the phenomenon under study.

The analysis in this study focuses on describing the meanings of selected lexical items and identifying their semantic fields, particularly the terms “*black card*” and “*diamonds*.” In line with the characteristics of qualitative description, the interpretation remains low-inference, meaning that the findings are presented in a straightforward manner without excessive abstract or theoretical transformation.

This study uses a **qualitative descriptive method** because the data consist of words and phrases taken from the song lyrics of “*7 Rings*” by Ariana Grande. The analysis focuses on describing the meaning of selected lexical items and identifying their semantic fields, especially the terms “*black card*” and “*diamonds*.”

The research was conducted from **October 2025 to January 2026**. The analysis was carried out through Musixmatch, using the song lyrics titled “*7 Rings*” and supporting semantic literature.

From the official lyrics of Ariana Grande's ‘*7 Rings*’, Musixmatch provided the song data. Theoretical evidence from linguistic textbooks and articles, such as Wierzbicka (1990) on the meanings of colour terms, supports this.

The data were collected by observing the performance of the product by the customer in real-life situations using in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation. First, carefully read the lyrics. Second, identify lexical items related to luxury and material wealth. Third, take notes on semantic fields that appear in the selected vocabulary.

The data were analyzed through several stages. First, the researcher begins by identifying key words and expressions found in the song lyrics, such as *black card* and *diamonds*. Second, these expressions are then categorized into semantic fields related to

wealth, exclusivity, and luxury. Third, their meanings are analyzed using theories of lexical semantics, particularly Wierzbicka's discussion of color terms, to understand how meaning is constructed. Based on this analysis, conclusions are drawn by considering the contextual meaning of these expressions within the lyrics.

The research instrument is the researcher themselves, supported by. First, the 7 Rings lyrics from Musixmatch. Second, semantic Theories. Third, Scholarly sources on Wierzbicka's interpretation of color terms and lexical semantics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Lexical Interpretation of "Black Card"

In the lyrics, the line "*Black card is my business card*" highlights the use of the expression *black card* as a symbol of wealth, power, and exclusivity. This interpretation is also consistent with (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), who argue that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism through which people conceptualize abstract ideas. In this case, "black card" functions as more than a financial object; it metaphorically represents social prestige, privilege, and power. In this context, the phrase does not simply refer to a color or an object, but represents high social status and elite privilege.

From a semantic perspective, the meaning of *black* can be explained using (Wierzbicka, 1990) discussion of color terms. While Wierzbicka primarily describes *black* in relation to visibility—specifically, situations in which people cannot see anything—the color also carries strong cultural associations. In many contexts, *black* is linked to power, formality, authority, and exclusivity. These associations support the interpretation of *black card* as a marker of luxury and social dominance within the song's lyrics.

In the real life, a **black card** especially the American Express Centurion is:

- invitation-only,
- extremely limited,
- used by ultra-wealthy individuals.

Thus, “black card” in the lyrics does not mean **literal color only**, but carries **symbolic lexical meaning**:

Meaning (Easy Explanation):

- “Black card” means **exclusive**.”
- “Not everyone can have it.”
- “It is believed that this service is just for the affluent or the privileged.”
- “Having it signifies that the owner belongs to an elite class or possesses a high standing in society.”

With her often repeated phrase ‘the black card is my business card’, the pop star conveys the message that *she herself is luxury and exclusivity*.

This view is supported by Wierzbicka’s observation that colours are culturally symbolic concepts, not just purely visual ones.

2. Lexical Semantics of “Diamonds”

The song also states:
“*Bought matching diamonds for six of my bitches...*”

*Semantic Meaning

“Diamonds” belong to the **semantic field of expensive materials, value, and wealth**.

In lexical semantics:

- *diamond* universally symbolizes **high price, rarity, and luxury**.
- the meaning is *not only physical*, but also *cultural* (associated with status, power, success).

In Wierzbicka’s theory, material terms often function like color terms: they reflect **shared human experience**—in this case, people know diamonds are:

- hard to get,
- very expensive,
- symbols of achievement.

***Meaning (Easy Explanation):**

- “Diamonds” means **something very expensive and luxurious**.
- It also shows **self-value**—buying diamonds for herself and her friends shows *empowerment*.

Thus, the phrase “*matching diamonds*” emphasizes **wealth, independence, and high social status**, supporting the song’s theme of self-empowerment.

3. Combined Interpretation

Both expressions construct a **semantic field of luxury**:

Expression	Semantic Field	Meaning in Song
Black Card	Exclusivity, status, power	She belongs to the elite; only a few people can have a black card.
Diamonds	Wealth, value, luxury	She can afford extremely expensive things; symbolize empowerment.

These lexical items help build the song’s identity as a declaration of financial independence, confidence, and female empowerment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings indicate that the lexical items used in “*7 Rings*” form semantic fields related to luxury and empowerment.

- The expression *black card* represents exclusivity and elite social status.
- The word *diamonds* conveys ideas of high value, expense, and luxury.

In the opinion of Wierzbicka, colour terms are not used merely to describe objective colours. Ariana Grande advocates for self-empowerment and independence in her songs. Ariana Grande advocates for self-empowerment and independence in her songs.

The findings imply that:

- Song lyrics can be meaningful linguistic data for studying lexical semantics.
- The terms *black* and *diamond* reflect specific cultural values that go beyond their literal meanings.

Through analyzing these terms, students can better understand how language works to express identity and how ideas from popular culture are used to create social meaning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cruse, A. (2000). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110226614.74>
- Hurford R., J., Heasley, B., & Smith B., M. (2007). *Semantics: A Coursebook*. Cambridge University Press.
- Istama, N. R., Al-Anwar, S. F., & Aidil Syah Putra. (2024). Semantic Analysis of Metaphors of Selected James Arthur's Song. *English Teaching Journal and Research: Journal of English Education, Literature, And Linguistics*, 4(2), 32-46. <https://doi.org/10.55148/etjar.v4i2.1139>
- Kendong, F. A., Daud, A. S., Joharry, S. A., & Mcgraw, T. (2023). A Corpus- driven Analysis of Taylor Swift ' s Song Lyrics Taylor Swift ' s song lyrics as a specialised corpus Teardrops on My Guitar. *International Journal of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 59-82. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/83439>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By.pdf* (p. 129).
- Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics: The Study of Meaning Second edition - revised and updated*. 388.
- Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics 1*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nilsen, D. L. F., & Palmer, F. R. (1976). Semantics: Second edition. In *The Modern Language Journal* (Vol. 60, Issue 7, p. 414). <https://doi.org/10.2307/324444>
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods: Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing and Health*, 23(4), 334-340. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240x\(200008\)23:4<334::aid-nur9>3.0.co;2-g](https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240x(200008)23:4<334::aid-nur9>3.0.co;2-g)
- Wierzbicka, A. (1990). The meaning of color terms: Semantics, culture, and cognition. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 1(1), 99-150. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1990.1.1.99>