

Effects of English Pop Music on Pakistani Teenagers: An Online Survey Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of English pop music on the language of Pakistani youth. Online survey through questionnaire method has been employed to ascertain the myth and reality of the established notions. It questions the existing hypothesis and contention held by the researchers that teenagers, when interacted in the English language with their peers, often utter offensive slangs. This trend was considered to be more prevalent among male subjects as compared to female community in Pakistan. One of the key reasons noticed was an addiction to English pop music and hence was selected for the present study. Daily interactions of hundred teen males and females, addicted to English pop music, were observed randomly. All the respondents solved the questionnaire via Facebook IDs. The collected results were analysed through social science software SPSS 20. Application of paired sample t-test revealed astonishingly contradictory results. The hypothesis cherished earlier proved that female teenagers use more abusive language and slangs than males.

Keywords: English pop music, Abusive slangs, SPSS 20 Software, Online poll, t-Test

Introduction

Pakistan, being a post-colonial society inherits a great influence of English language and culture on their native language. Since 1947, it has been taught as a compulsory subject in educational institutions. Existing educational system and many schools emphasise on teaching “all subjects in English and expect their pupils to use English in informal every day conversation” Rehman (1990. p.9). The particular age group of 12 to 19 years, however, use English slangs to brag about their self-proclaimed native like proficiency, and to impress their peers by being trendy. Media, both electronic and social media, serves a catalyst in the promotion of such slangs. Tariq Rehman, in an informal lecture on “Teaching of English Language in Pakistan” (2005) further elaborates this perception as, “English cannot be taught. It is learnt through various channels e.g. through peers, exposure to non-serious extra-academic writings such as comics, and by watching English movies.” (as cited in Saeed 2013 p.253).

Music is the most thriving industry in the world in general and Pakistan in particular. Hargreaves & North (1997), state that music, like language, also communicates and creates an impact on society. Generally it has been observed that the foreign culture, reflected through music, affects language of ESL learners particularly the teenagers. Similarly, this paper also tends to explore and scrutinize the effects of English pop music on the language of teenagers through an online survey using questionnaire method.

The researchers observed that day to day interactions of male teenagers have more frequent use of inappropriate slangs as compared to females, and due to their excessive exposure to English pop music, which contained maximum slangs, taboo situations, and abuses. The Oxford Dictionary (2011) defines abuse as

- “[with object] use (something) to bad effect or for a bad purpose; misuse”
- “treat with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly”
- “speak to (someone) in an insulting and offensive way”

Daily English communication of hundred teen males and females, addicted to English pop music, were examined randomly. On the basis of these observations, researchers hypothesised that male teenagers use more offensive slangs than female teenagers. The subjects were asked to fill out a questioner posted online as a cyber-poll to analyse the responses of both genders. The questionnaire included their music preferences and reasons of fondness for the particular song. The designed questionnaire aimed at measuring the responses of questions on 1-4 liker scale, where option “a” stands for least vituperative and vulgar and option “d” most vituperative and risqué. Option “b” stands for more abusive than option “a” but less insulting than option “c”. SPSS 20 software and sample-t Test was applied to evaluate and analyse the collected data and to explore whether demographic characteristics had a significant impact on both the genders or not? The results rejected the hypothesis cherished earlier and exhibited that the female teens are more prone to the use of derogatory slangs adopted from their favourite songs than male teens.

Literature Review

Music is a communicative activity [purposed at entertainment](Hargreaves & North, 1997), which ‘synchronizes creating an intersubjective lifeworld’(Martin 1995,p. 200 cited in Hargreaves & North, 1997). Bryant defines it as, “music not as a language, but as a marked-based, problem-solving method such as mathematics” (as cited in Ashby 2004, p. 4). According to Patel (2003, p.1), music is a human universal involving ‘perceptually discrete elements organized into hierarchically structured sequences.’ Multiple reasons have been identified for likeness of a particular music genre, among them, genders and age groups comprise mammoth part. According to results of research conducted by North, Hargreaves, & O’Neill, (2000), music is important for adolescents” as it satisfies their emotional needs and thus ‘listening to music was preferred to other indoor activities but not to outdoor activities” (p.1).

In West, the love for music can be analysed through the study of Bastian (2002, as cited in Rana, Ajmal & North, 2011) report stated that by 2000 the retail value of the global recorded music industry stood at US \$37 billion, which corresponded to sales of 2.5 billion units. Similarly, Davis (1985), noticed an average of 10,500 hours spent by American adolescents in elected listening to Western pop music.

Lyrics are the most important ingredient of the music. Some genres of music (rap, heavy metal, hip-hop, and pop) have particularly objectionable lyrics affecting the social, psychological, and behavioural outlook of both teenagers and adolescents. Pediatrics (1996), considered it ‘important to teenagers’ identity’ but simultaneously pin pointed its explicit nature of lyrics comprised of [sic for comprised] references to ‘sex, drugs, and violence’ (p.1). Joshi & Kaschak (1998) also claim that violent propensities among the youth are due to songs with obscene lyrics.

The trend of English pop music among Pakistani teenagers experienced a mushroom growth due to multiple factors that include the convenient accessibility of the internet, social media, and multiple music smart phone applications, which, however, have increased the concern among a sizable group of many parents in the post-cold war era. Flud (2009, et al), stated that “Parents often are unaware of the lyrics which their children are listening because of the increasing use of downloaded music and headphone” (p.1).

Research Methodology

Subjects

A random sample of hundred teen male and female respondents from Pakistan was selected for the present study by the researchers of the present study.

Instrument

Online questionnaire method was designed and executed to collect information about the respondent’s gender, age, preferences, and the following items:

- preference for some pop icon (famous for vulgar lyrics and offensive content in their songs)
- favourite songs (the given choices included the songs famous for their vituperative lyrics)
- the reason of fondness for a particular song (options included: tune, lyrics, videos, or/and the singer).

The designed questionnaire measured the responses of questions on 1-4 liker scale, where option “a” stands for least scathing and vulgar, and option “d” most vituperative and vulgar. Option “b” stands for more abusive than option “a” but less insulting than option “c”. This questionnaire was posted online as a cyber-poll to analyse the responses of both genders. The respondents completed the questionnaire via their Facebook IDs. The subjects already knew the purpose of this research, though the nature of research was not shared with them.

The researchers believe that this instrument will be more valid as almost all the youth is addicted to Facebook. (Desk, 2012), stated over six million Facebook users in Pakistan, among them 3.57 million are males and 1.59 are females. Questions were designed keeping in view the age, genders, and interests of the respondents. The researchers observed that many subjects felt privileged by being interviewed about their song preferences.

Data Analysis

Social science software SPSS 20, was utilised in two steps, where the first step calculated descriptive statistics for various categories of self-identity change, and also included calculation of means, and the second step, Sample-t Test, application unveils whether demographic characteristics have significant changes on the genders or not.

Means of Females

Table 01 and 02 show the one-sample statistics gathered by applying SPSS 20 software.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Asma	3	1.67	.577	.333
Hamna	3	1.67	.577	.333
Saira	3	2.00	.000 ^a	.000
Tahira	3	1.67	.577	.333
Wardah	3	2.00	1.000	.577
Rabia	3	1.67	1.155	.667
Warda m	3	1.67	.577	.333
Saba	3	2.33	1.528	.882
Maria	3	1.67	.577	.333
Hiza	3	1.67	1.155	.667
Amna	3	2.67	1.528	.882
Fatima	3	1.33	.577	.333
Arooj	3	1.33	.577	.333
Faiza	3	1.33	.577	.333
Jannat	3	4.00	.000 ^a	.000
Bilkees	3	1.33	.577	.333

One-Sample Test

Table 02

	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Asma	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Hamna	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Tahira	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Wardah	3.464	2	.074	2.000	-.48	4.48
Rabia	2.500	2	.130	1.667	-1.20	4.54
Warda m	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Saba	2.646	2	.118	2.333	-1.46	6.13
Maria	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Hiza	2.500	2	.130	1.667	-1.20	4.54
Amna	3.024	2	.094	2.667	-1.13	6.46
Fatima	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77
Arooj	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77
Faiza	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77
Bilkees	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77

One-Sample Statistics

Table 03 and 04 show the one sample statistics of males gathered by applying SPSS 20 software.

Table 03: Means of males

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Soban	3	1.67	.577	.333
Najam	3	1.67	.577	.333
Xaad	3	1.67	.577	.333
Abuzer	3	1.33	.577	.333
Faizan	3	1.33	.577	.333
Ali hasan	3	4.00	.000 ^a	.000
Sheeda	3	4.00	.000 ^a	.000
Toseef	3	4.00	.000 ^a	.000
Haris	3	3.33	.577	.333
Bilwal	3	2.33	1.528	.882
Billa g	3	1.67	.577	.333
Shoaib	3	3.33	.577	.333
Mink	3	3.33	1.155	.667
Waqas	3	1.67	.577	.333
Faisal	3	1.67	.577	.333
Ali	3	1.67	.577	.333

Table 04: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Soban	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Najam	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Xaad	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Abuzer	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77
Faizan	4.000	2	.057	1.333	-.10	2.77
Haris	10.000	2	.010	3.333	1.90	4.77
Bilwal	2.646	2	.118	2.333	-1.46	6.13
Billa g	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Shoaib	10.000	2	.010	3.333	1.90	4.77
Mink	5.000	2	.038	3.333	.46	6.20
Waqas	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Faisal	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10
Ali	5.000	2	.038	1.667	.23	3.10

Calculation of paired sample statistics has been shown in Table 05.

Table 05: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Means m	1.8756	16	.67667	.16917
	Means f	2.2712	16	.96635	.24159

Table 06 shows the Paired Samples Correlations obtained by applying sample t-Test

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	means & means	16	-.114	.675

Paired Sample t-Tests

Application of paired sample t-Tests has been given in Table 06.

Table 06: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	means - means	-.39562	1.24122	.31030	-1.05702	.26577	-1.275	15	.222

Validity of Data:

Frequencies of the variables are calculated to obtain the percentile of numeric variables.

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=means means_A

/ORDER=ANALYSIS.

The statistics of the variables are given in Table 07.

Table 07: Statistics

		Means	Means
N	Valid	16	16
	Missing	0	0

Cumulative percent of both males and females is calculated and presented in table 8 and 9.

Table 8: Means of males

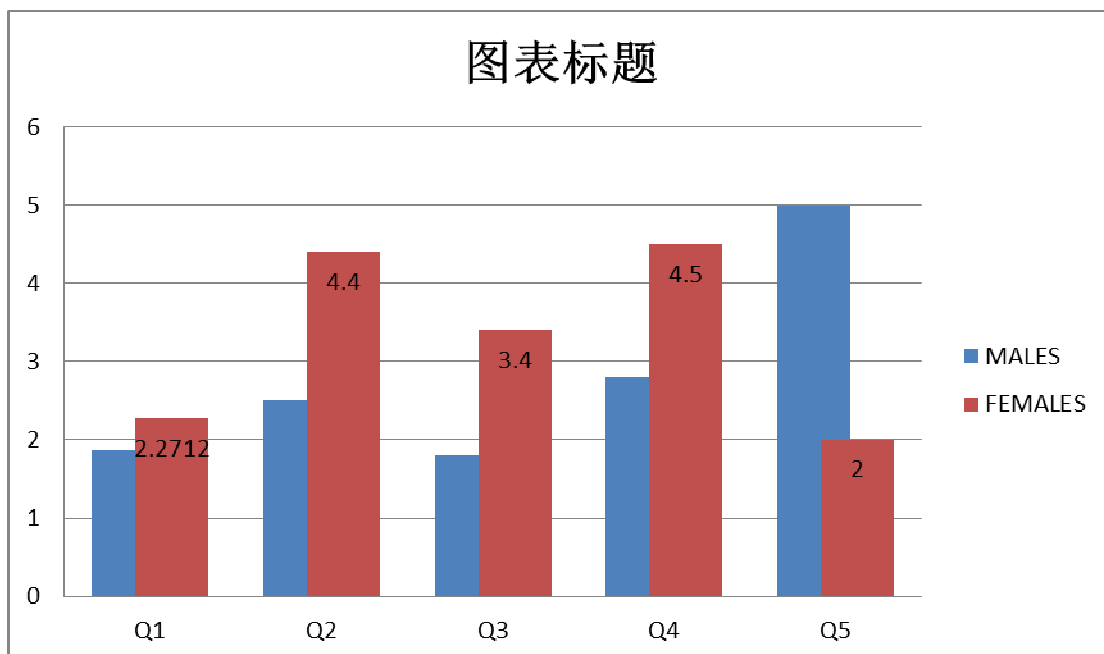
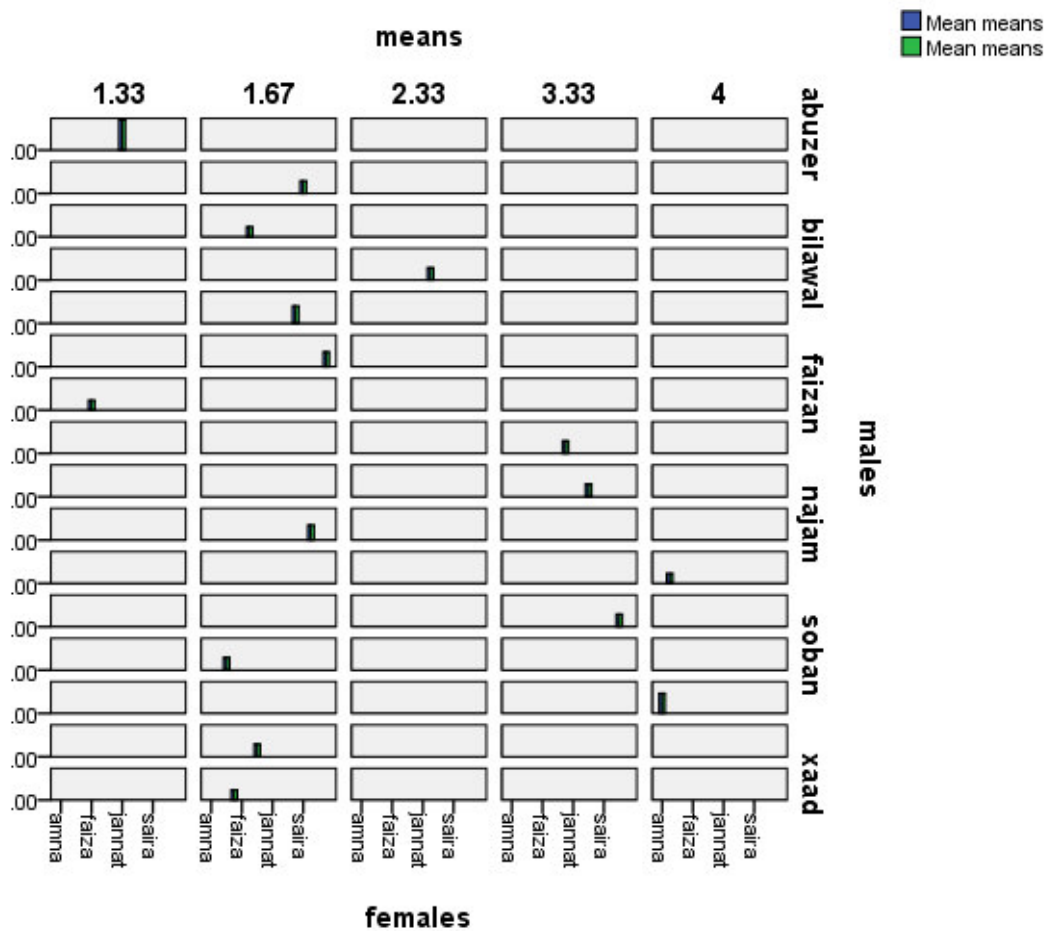
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.33	4	25.0	25.0
	1.67	7	43.8	68.8
	2.00	2	12.5	81.3
	2.33	1	6.3	87.5
	2.67	1	6.3	93.8
	4.00	1	6.3	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

Table 09: Means of females

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.33	2	12.5	12.5
	1.67	8	50.0	62.5
	2.33	1	6.3	68.8
	3.33	3	18.8	87.5
	4.00	2	12.5	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

Graph logical interpretation of results

The obtained results are presented in graph logically for more clarity.



Results and Discussion

The startling results reveal that Pakistani female teenagers are more prone towards the use of inappropriate language and slangs learnt from the western pop music, as compared to males. The subjects prefer and listened to those pop songs and singers who are famous for their “low language.” Interestingly, the results also displayed that females prefer lyrics as compared to male subjects, who preferred tunes, beats, and popularity in the given

songs. Moreover, female teenagers not only repeat such lyrics more often than male teenagers, but also take pride in knowing more ‘in’ abuses than males.

It also challenges the previous research works—Thelwall 2008b (as cited in Herring and Kapidzic 2015) which studied the use of swearwords on online profile pages of US teenagers concluded that male teenagers use more swearwords than females— and rejects the hypothesis formulated earlier. In Pakistani context, the inclination towards English slangs and abuses among both genders is mainly to impress their peers and to appear more up-to-date.

Conclusion

Music has both positive and negative impact on the minds of listeners, depending on the genre and lyrics. Gender acceptability of music is directly associated with age and genre preferences. The present study proves it by exploring the impact of English pop music on the routine conversational means of Pakistani teenagers. The research reveals adverse effects of the lyrics used in latest English pop songs by observing the daily English language interactions of male and female subjects. Online survey study has been conducted to test the hypothesis formed earlier and has involved participants from both genders. SPSS 20 software has been utilised to analyse the obtained results. The results show that female teenagers use more risqué slangs as compared to male teenagers—thus disproving the long cherished notions on the gender-specificity to vice versa inferences. This unhealthy pattern can be checked and thwarted through: filtering the communication and media sources through regulatory tools; reducing the exposure of teens to un-parliamentary, derisive and abusive language. Bridging the generation gap also promises to yield the desired outcome.

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