

UNVEILING THE VEILED: A NOVEL EXPLORATION OF GENDERED SLANG USAGE AMONG PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This current study, conducted using a quantitative methodology, aims to explore the use of slang language among Pakistani university students, specifically exploring any gender differences that may exist. In Pakistani universities, there is an increasing awareness of exploring the use of slang language and its potential variation across genders. The data analysis reveals that students frequently use slang. While students regularly use slang language, male students use more slang language than female students. A total of 400 students from multiple universities participated in this study.

Keywords: SlangUse; Quantitative Methodology; University Students; Gender Difference

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's language system is complex, including various regional languages across the country. Languages have grown, and comparing modern languages can help rebuild their history (Moseley, 2010). A language that has a shared ancestor is commonly known as a "family language." On the other hand, a language that has no connection with any language is known as "isolated language." Language is an organized mechanism humans use to connect (Austin & Sallabank, 2011). Alongside Urdu, the English language is also considered an official language of Pakistan. Gender plays a vigorous role in influencing how slang is used in a particular society. When talking about "slang," people often consider it an abusive language, but in reality, abusive words are considered only a form of slang language (Mazhar, 2015). The current study addresses how slang language is differently perceived and adapted within the community of male and female students at Pakistani Universities. Understanding how men and women use slang differently can help researchers and scholars in various fields. More specifically, this study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field by finding out any potential differences in slang language among male and female students of Pakistan at the university level.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the perception and approach towards slang language among male and female students in Pakistan.
- To examine to which extent students at the university level use slang.
- To evaluate the influence of slang language on gender in university surroundings.

The study has certain limitations and delimitations. Limitations in research refer to aspects that may impact the validity or reliability of the study findings. One limitation of the present study may be the difficulty in maintaining a representative sample size, as slang usage can vary among individuals of the same gender. Delimitations involve focusing on specific age groups, regions, or backgrounds to narrow down the scope of the study. For the current research purpose, this study is delimited by gathering data from university students in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Language is a systematic way of communication that compromises vocabulary and grammar. It is how humans express their views in written or spoken forms or sign languages (Evans &

Stephen, 2009). Our official offices, educational institutes, and even businesses use English. English is considered to be the priority of the administration. They have to watch out for the level of formality and informality in communication, which includes the use of slang language. Linguists particularly do not have any proper definition of "slang language". However, this is debatable because many people rely on the fact that slang exists. After all, we need to find ways to identify new experiences fetched through time and current modern eras (Dumas & Lighter, 1978). Eric Partridge, a British Lexicographer, was the one who officially introduced the term "slang" in a very linguistic manner (Coleman, 2012). In Pakistani universities, students now use slang more repeatedly. This phenomenon must be seen through theoretical lenses, such as Social Identity Theory and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Initially proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) in the late 70s, Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals develop shared identities depending on how they participate in a community, such as ethnic or gender identifications. This theory appeared to simplify how people construct and identify their societal positions (Hudi, 2001). Social Identity Theory demonstrates how people develop their role in a community or society. However, Pakistani students may use slang language as a way to express their social identity within their gender groups. According to the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), people communicate with each other to express their sentiments towards one another and to indicate their social distance. By adjusting one's informal behaviour, this continuing movement of words towards and away from others is labelled "accommodation" (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Pakistani students might utilize slang language varying depending on gender to fit alongside their peers.

Research Methodology

A research method in which data is recorded in numerical form is known as Quantitative research methodology (Punch, 2013). Because quantitative research methodologies deal with numbers, they are considered more objective, credible, and reliable. For the current study, quantitative research methodology, specifically online questionnaires, has been used to collect the required data.

Research Questions:

- How does slang language usage differ between male and female University students in Pakistan?
- What are the students' perspectives regarding slang language?
- How does the slang language influence the gender?

Sampling:

For the current study, data is collected from Eight Universities in Pakistan: the University of Sialkot (USKT), the University of Management and Technology (UMT), the University of Lahore (UOL), the University of Gujrat (UOG), the University of Chenab (UChenab), Forman Christian College and University (FCCU), GIFT University, and the University of Engineering and Technology (UET). Additionally, data is collected through an online questionnaire from 400 participants.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information:

Demographic information assists the researcher in recognizing the diversity that may exist within a community or population. It plays a mandatory role in the research process as it helps collect various variables, e.g., Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Organization Name, Education, Location, etc. For the current study, Gender, Age, Institute, and Education are considered for research

purposes. The following is the data analysis of the demographic part of the questionnaire used in the study.

Gender

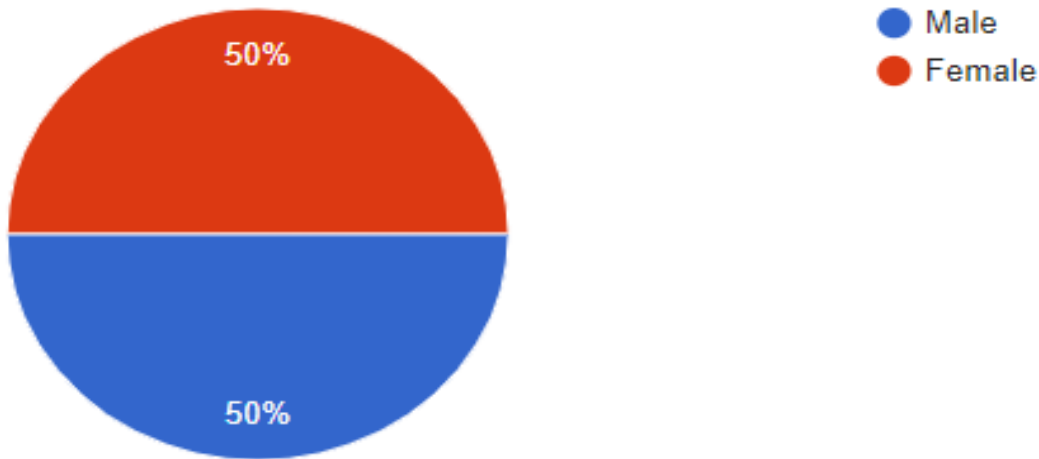


Figure. 1

Data for this study was collected through an online questionnaire. Of 400 participants, 200 (50%) are male students, and 200 (50%) are female students.

Age

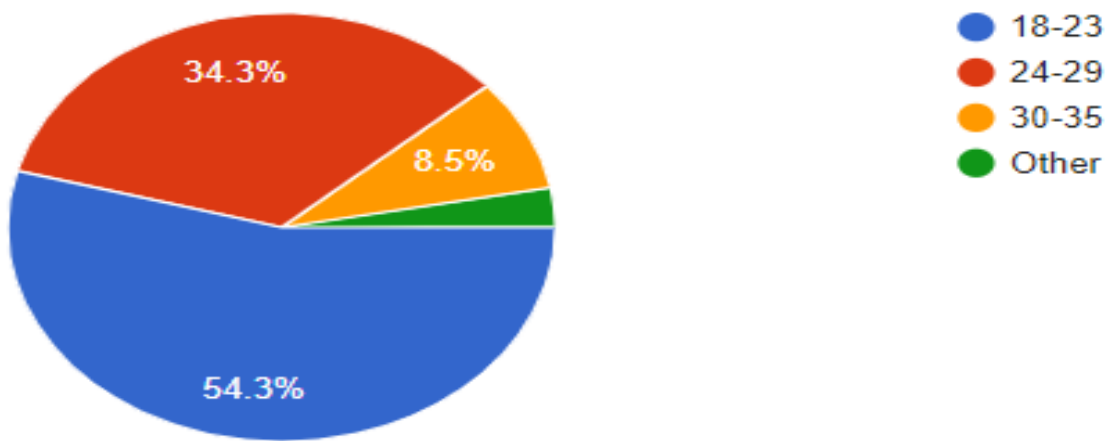


Figure. 2

Out of 400 participants, 54.3% of students fall in the 18-23 age group, 34.3% belong to the 24-29 age group, 8.5% belong to the 30-35 age group, and only 3% belong to the "other" age group.

Education

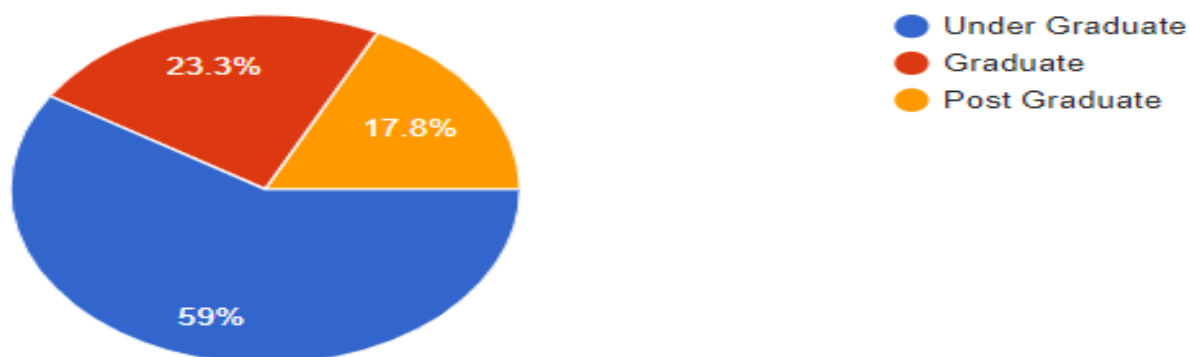


Figure. 3

Out of 400 participants, the results show that 59% of students are Undergraduate, 23.3% are Graduate, and 17.8% are post-graduate.

Questionnaire

For the research purpose, questionnaire items have been adopted from previous relevant studies, i.e., Hashmi & Mahmood et al. (2019) and Kawther & Hafsa (2019).

Questionnaire Item 1: I am familiar with the term "slang."

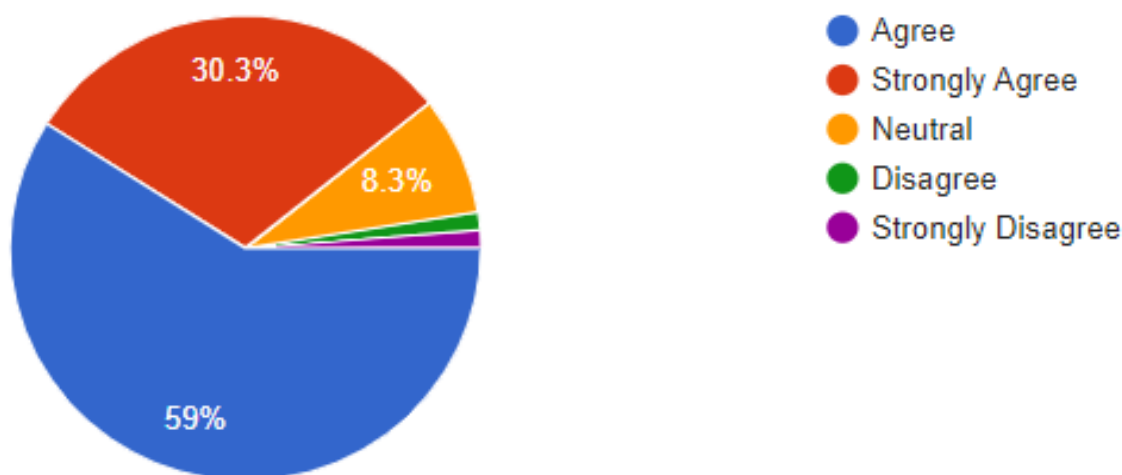


Figure. 4

It is apparent that a large proportion, accounting for 59% of the overall sample size, is familiar with the term "Slang" as they agree with it, followed by 30.3% of the proportion that strongly agrees. However, 8.3% of the participants chose to remain neutral, with a small proportion disagreeing and strongly disagreeing, covering 1.2% and 1.2%, respectively.

Questionnaire Item 2: I use slang language to add informality to my interactions and frankness with my conversation partners.

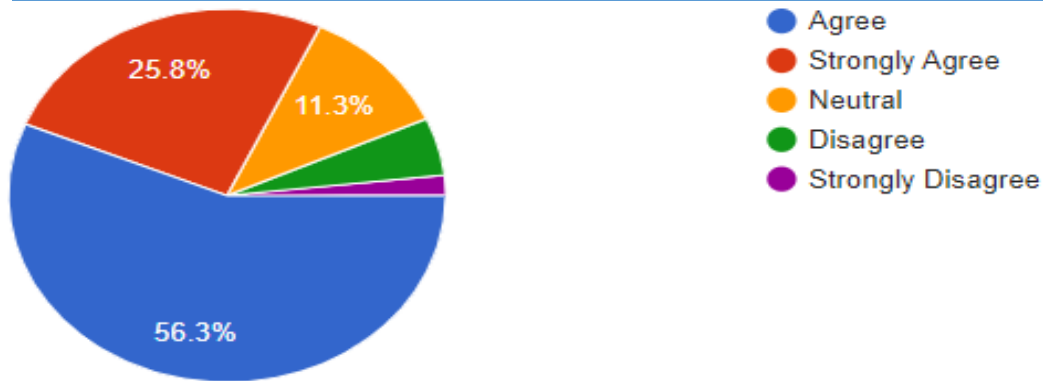


Figure. 5

Over 56.3% of the participants agree with the above statement, and 25.8% strongly agree. On the other hand, 11.3% decided to remain neutral, with 5% and 1.7% disagreeing and strongly agreeing, respectively.

Questionnaire Item 3: I have observed that slang language is frequently used among students at the university level.

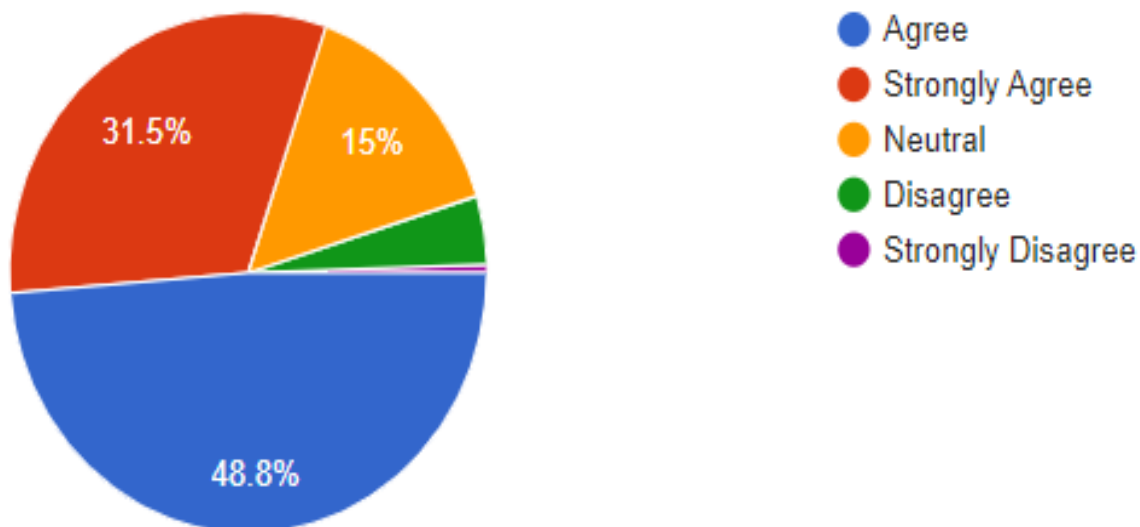


Figure. 6

A notable percentage (48.8%) agrees, while a considerable number of participants (31.5%) strongly agree; however, 15% of the respondents choose to remain neutral with their opinion. In addition, 4.2% disagree, with a very insignificant percentage (0.5%) strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Questionnaire Item 4: I want to learn slang language and use it with my university peers.

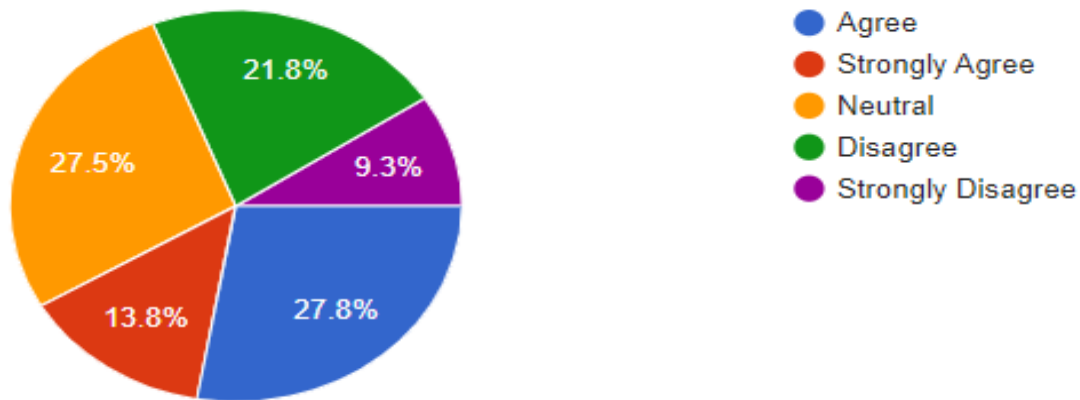


Figure. 7

The results reveal a diverse range of opinions regarding the questionnaire answers. While a significant portion (27.8%) agrees with the responses, a smaller percentage (13.8%) strongly agrees. On the other hand, a notable proportion (21.8%) disagrees, with a smaller percentage (9.3%) strongly disagreeing. Additionally, a substantial portion (27.5%) remains neutral, indicating a balanced distribution of opinions. These findings suggest a nuanced perspective among respondents.

Questionnaire Item 5: The frequency of my use of slang varies depending on the conversation context.

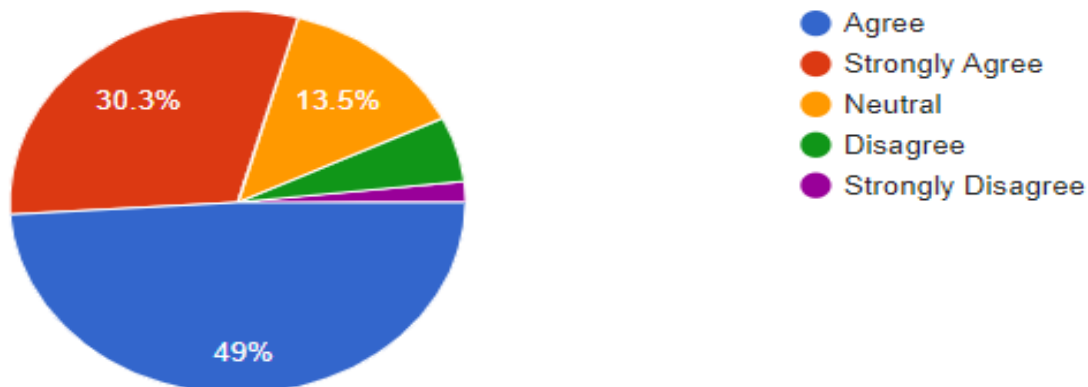


Figure. 8

A major percentage (49%) agree with the responses, and 30.3% strongly agree. While 13.5% of participants remain neutral, 5.5% disagree with it, and 1.7% strongly disagree. The above pie chart indicates that an extreme number of participants acknowledge that the frequency with which they use slang varies according to the context of their conversation. Conversely, a minimal proportion does not agree with this at all.

Questionnaire Item 6: I often use slang words while writing my university exams.

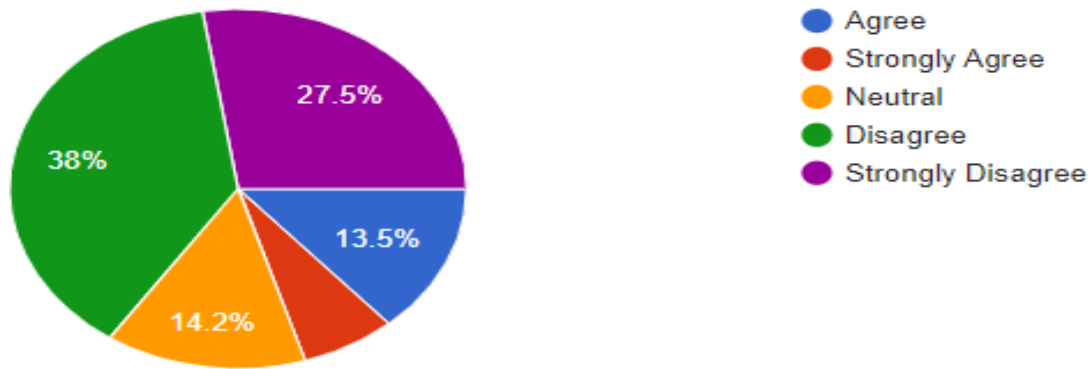


Figure. 9

The outcomes of this graph show that the majority (38%) of the participants disagree, while 27.5% of respondents strongly disagree with it. However, 14.2% of participants remained neutral while answering this specific statement. Additionally, a very small number of participants agree and strongly agree, with 13.5% and 6.8%, respectively. The results of the above graph clearly show that students usually do not use slang words while writing down the exams.

Questionnaire Item 7: University students avoid using slang terms more commonly.

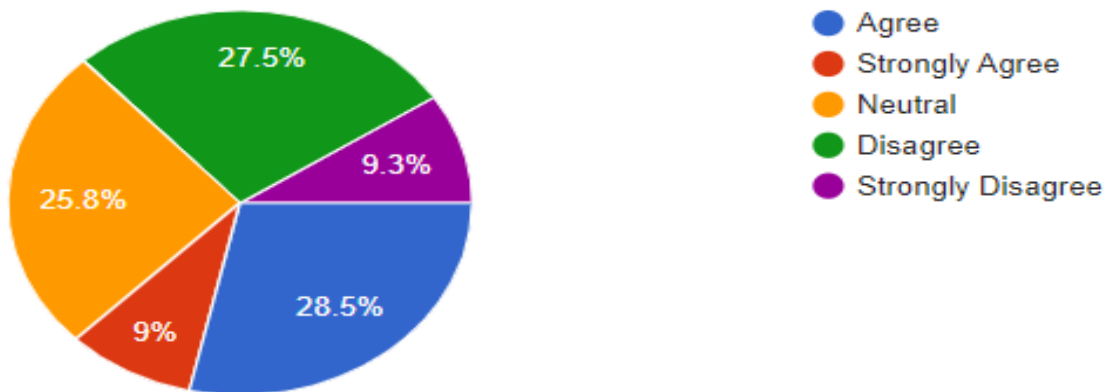


Figure. 10

The results of this graph are debatable. While 28.5% of the participants agree with the statement, a smaller percentage (9%) strongly agree. On the other hand, a noteworthy proportion (27.5%) disagrees, and a lesser percentage (9.3%) strongly disagrees. However, 25.8% of respondents choose to remain neutral in this regard.

Questionnaire Item 8: Male students use more slang than female students.

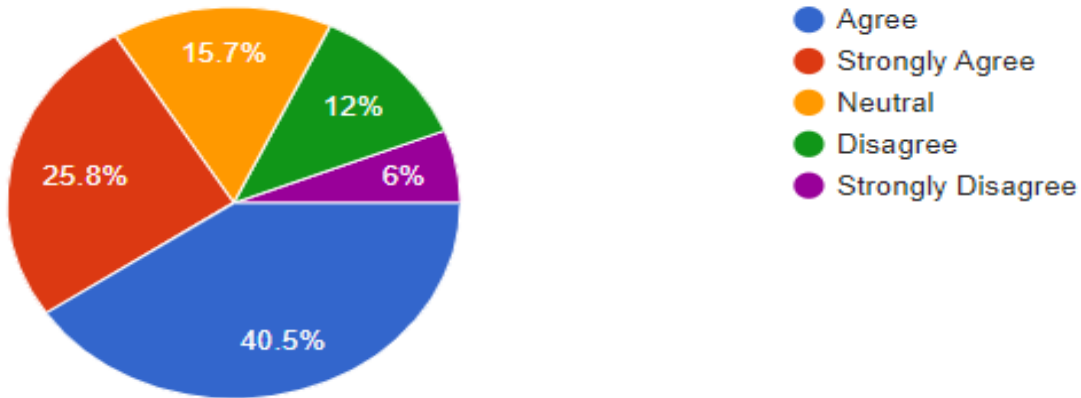


Figure. 11

A Massive proportion (40.5%) agrees, and 25.8% strongly agree with the statement. On the other hand, a smaller percentage (12%) disagrees, and 6% strongly disagree with it. However, 15.7% of the respondents chose to remain neutral, and the results indicate that most respondents consider that male students use more slang words than female students.

Questionnaire Item 9: I use slang language with my university fellows to show specific self-assurance.

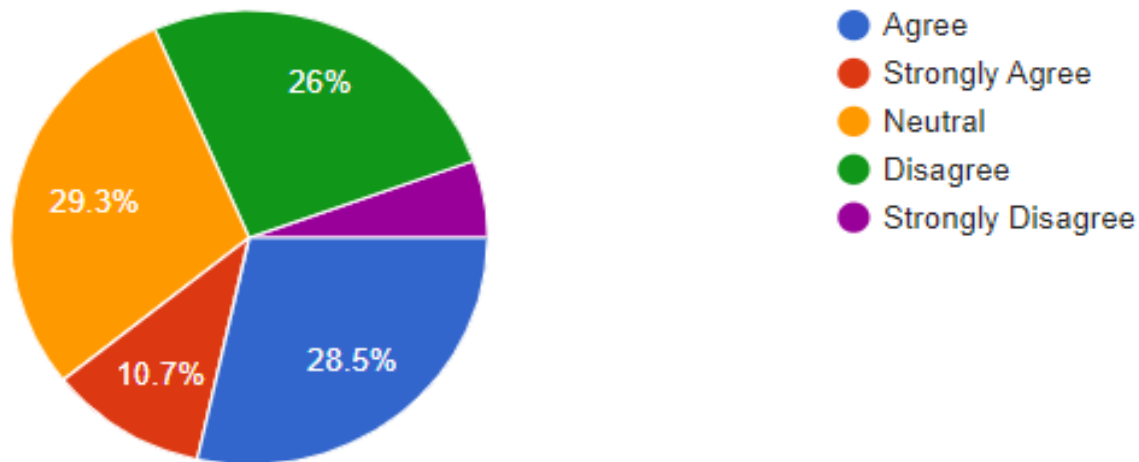


Figure. 12

The results indicate that a significant proportion (28.5%) strongly agrees with the statement, with a smaller percentage (10.7%) agreeing. However, a notable number of participants (29.3%) remain neutral about their opinion. Additionally, many participants (26%) disagree with it, and a few respondents (5.5%) strongly disagree.

Questionnaire Item 10: Using slang can positively and negatively influence university students.

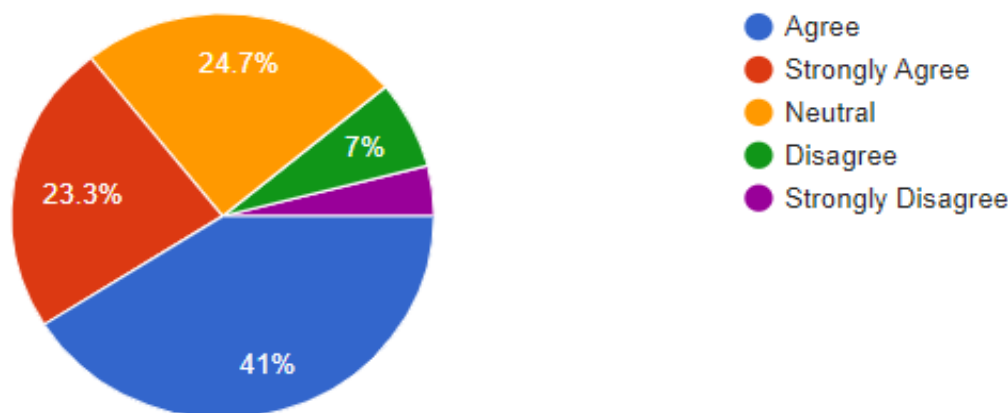


Figure. 13

Out of 400 participants, 41% agree with the **statement**, and 23.3% strongly agree with it. While 24.7% remain neutral, very few participants (7%) disagree with it, and 4% strongly disagree. The results show that the usage of slang language has both positive and negative influences on university students.

Findings

The key findings aligned according to the research objectives are discussed below:

The first objective of this current study is to find out the perception and approach towards slang language among male and female students. After the data analysis, it was found that both male and female students are familiar with the term "slang", and the general perception of slang language among them is that it adds frankness, familiarity and casualness to their conversation.

The second objective of this study is to examine to what extent students at the university level use slang language. After analyzing the data, it was reported that students in university surroundings frequently use slang. However, it has also been observed that male students tend to use more slang words than female students.

The third objective of this study is to evaluate the influence of slang language on gender in the university environment. During data analysis, it was observed that slang language has both positive and negative effects on students. Some students also use slang words while writing the exams, but most choose not to use slang when attempting the exams. On the other hand, it is also observed that the frequency of slang language usage highly depends on the context of the student's conversation.

Conclusion

To conclude the study in a broader context, the data revealed that using "slang language" is very common among Pakistani university students. However, each individual has a different perception regarding slang. After the data analysis, it can be suggested that slang usage may have positive and negative influences on students, depending on the context in which it is being used.

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