

## USE OF SLANG AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS IN KARACHI

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### Abstract

*Slang is one of the important components of spoken discourse. It is integrated in our everyday language to such an extent that we cannot ignore its significance while analyzing the discourse specifically of the younger generation. This paper investigates the nature of Urdu and English slang used among different age groups; children, teenagers and adolescents in particular, living in Karachi. It also discusses the attitudes of elders, which includes parents and teachers, towards the use of slang words nowadays. Simultaneous cross sectional design is adopted to compare the age groups which helped in examining their discourse and exploring different categories in it, which emerged while observing the language of the age groups selected. The result shows that adolescents also incorporate slang in everyday life, as much as teenagers do but there are different categories that distinguish the vocabulary of the two age groups. Moreover informal discussions also helped elicit the responses of parents and teachers towards the excessive use of slang by the youngsters in our society.*

**Keywords:** slang, abusive words, spoken discourse, discourse analysis, interpersonal routines, in-group communication.

### Introduction

Slang is an inseparable component of spoken discourse that continuously undergoes transition. It consists of dramatic and colorful expressions or terms that can be specified to an in-group communication. Slangs are based on different social ideologies, identities and constructs which give a sense of spontaneity, humor and informality among the speakers. According to Stenstorm (2014), 'What is regarded as slang changes through time. It is short-lived and creative; some slang words disappear, while new ones appear.' (Stenstorm 2014, p.13). The definition of slang according to the Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2015) is, 'very informal language that is usually spoken rather than written, used especially by particular groups of people.'

Slang vocabulary does not only include abusive words. Sometimes people are unable to distinguish between the two terms, slang and abusive words, and think that these two words can be used interchangeably. According to the Cambridge Dictionaries Online, abusive words are 'rude and offensive terms', Merriam Webster Dictionary Online (2016) also provided a similar meaning of the word as, 'using harsh and insulting language'. Therefore abusive words can be seen as one of the categories of slang vocabulary.

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As discussed above, slang is usually used in spoken discourse. So in order to study slang it is important to analyze the discourse spoken by children, teenagers and adolescents. Coulthard (2007) states, 'one of the major aims of discourse analysis is to discover the conversational rules and to describe the structures they generate.' (p.6). It is pertinent here to keep in mind the distinction between a text and discourse. Widdowson (2007) simplified it, 'the term discourse is taken to refer both to what a text producer meant by a text and what a text means to the receiver.' (Widdowson 2007, p.7). So basically we can say that discourse is a communicative process which involves not only the production of a text but also its reception. This is why discourse analysis holds a great deal of significance in understanding the complete meaning of any utterance.

The use of slang in our day to day conversation helps fulfill the interpersonal routines. Widdowson (2007) elaborates that schematic conventions are context and situation dependent and interpersonal schemata are, 'customary ways in which we engage with second persons, the conventions we take for granted that concern how people normally interact with each other.' (Widdowson 2007, p.33). The interpersonal routines in which slang is used to facilitate communication specifically within a group can be divided into different categories based on their usage.

### **Aim and Significance**

The aim of this study is to investigate the trend and nature of slang expressions that are commonly used in Urdu by children (8-12 years old), teenagers (13-19 years old) and adolescents (20-25 years old) living in Karachi. It studies the variation in the slang vocabulary of the young generation that comes with age. Secondly it briefly voices the attitude of the elder generation towards the excessive use of slang by the youth nowadays.

Teenage slang is an area which has attracted some researchers for investigating the frequency of the terms, their semantic variation and the discourse. Mostly the studies lack comparison of the use of slang between different age groups. This study helps identify the nature of slang and the differences that emerge on the basis of age groups keeping in mind the context of Karachi.

### **Research Questions**

My research questions are:

- What is the nature of Urdu and English slang words used among different age groups in Karachi?
- What are the views of elders on the usage of Urdu and English slang expressions by the young generation?

### **Literature Review**

Researchers started working in the area of slang earlier than we generally think but it took a century for the idea of studying slang to gain widespread acceptance as an

integral part of spoken discourse. Significant studies came into light in 1900's when people developed interest in this area of language.

Marckwardt (1961) wrote a paper on lexicography of slang in which he discussed the problems a lexicographer faces while compiling a dictionary of slang words. His work was a brief analysis of an American slang dictionary; his analysis included the issues related to the way slang was defined in the preface of the dictionary and the way of presenting the slang words in chronological order.

The Kansas University Slang by Dundes and Schonhorn (1963) is considered as the landmark study among the works on slang. They replicated a study on college slang conducted in the same university in 1926. The aim of their study was to determine how many of the slang expressions recognized by the undergraduates at the Kansas University in 1926 were employed by the undergraduates of 1962. The findings revealed that not more than 35 of the previous expressions were known to some extent with different meaning and their use was not frequent. The paper provides an extensive bibliography of American slang expressions.

Kartz (1964) criticized Dundes and Schonhorn (1963) by stating that their study failed to distinguish between general American slang and college slang. Through various examples he supported his argument and defined what college slang is. According to him the meaning of college slang words is limited to the domain of college

In 1967, Heiman explained an interesting notion of using slang in teaching linguistics. He further explained that English teachers' generally resisted the use of slang but one cannot deny that it is a part of language. He said:

Perhaps by recognizing it, analyzing it as English, and putting it to use, we might teach its users some things they may not know about the language, the way they use it, and, the way we would like them to use it. We may even discover that some of the excitement students exhibit in using a slang dialect can be transferred to their learning the standard dialect. (Heiman 1967, p.249)

Hummon (1994) also wrote a paper 'College Slang Revisited' which was a comparative study of slang identities used by the undergraduates to characterize their peers at two institutes. He concluded that:

The undergraduate speech draw from both the general slang of the larger culture and from a subcultural vocabulary of college slang terms, of which some are broadly shared as part of a national collegiate subculture and others are part of more provincial regional or institutional subculture. (Hummon 1994, p.76)

Hill, 1994; Kiesling, 2004 worked on the word 'dude'. Hill (1994) elaborated how the word 'dude' had come a long way by undergoing 'shifts' as he termed it. Kiesling (2004) also worked on the trends of the term with reference to its functions and meanings as an address term. He suggested that the term 'dude' is gaining popularity

and it is evolving as a discourse marker which implies the speaker's attitude towards the addressee.

Similar to this Clancy (1999) in 'The Ascents of Guy' discussed different implications and domains in which the word 'Guy' is used. He enlightened that since the word is not literary it is only accepted in spoken discourse not in written discourse.

Many magazine articles have also been published with the same central idea. Gould (2013) also wrote 'A brief history of Dude' in which he gave a brief history of the word by referring to the research studies mentioned above and the implication of the word which shows solidarity. Chi (2015) also wrote an article expressing how masculine terms like, 'dude', 'bro' and 'guy' are becoming neutral address terms.

### **Methodology**

Qualitative paradigm was selected to achieve the aim of the study. It has an edge over quantitative paradigm because of the tools that help in generating authentic data which is unique and context driven. I used Simultaneous cross sectional design as I wanted to study the nature and change across different age groups. For this reason the participants were chosen from three different age groups, which are children (8-12years old, teenagers (13-19years old) and adolescents (20-25 years old). For the supplementary question, adults like teachers and parents were also made part of the study.

The research site included a school, University of Karachi and home domain because I could conveniently find the required age groups at these sites. I went to some of the renowned schools to conduct my research but they refused to cooperate so I met the students of those schools outside their campuses in their school vans. It proved to be more productive in terms of data collection as I asked those students to fill a questionnaire which I was able to do only because I knew some students personally and they helped in asking their friends to participate. One of the schools, situated in Karachi, allowed me to do my research work where I observed and administered a questionnaire. The University of Karachi also proved to be a rich source of data collection from the adolescents.

Since the research work was qualitative in nature it had given me the liberty to triangulate my data with the help of two or more tools to get credible and reliable research findings. The data collection instruments included observation, questionnaire and informal discussions. Observation is a multidimensional data collection tool that helps collect first hand data without any filter. Participants were observed at three different sites mentioned earlier. My role as an observer was non-participatory in nature so my presence could have been a threat especially when I was observing the use of slang expressions in the school. To minimize this threat which could contaminate my findings Covert observation was employed so only the administration knew that I was doing a research but the students were not aware of this fact. Since I had to observe the students during their lunch timings there was a possibility that they might enquire who I was. So, in order to familiarize them with my presence I stood with a teacher during that time for two days before starting my data collection. The students were inquisitive the first day then they thought I was a newly appointed teacher so the effect of my presence

was minimized. An advantage that I had while observing at this school was that the lunch breaks for primary and secondary sections were at different timings so I was easily able to categorize my data according to the age groups. At the University of Karachi and at home I observed my participants and took field notes on the spot.

The questionnaire was used as a supplementary tool. I asked 50 teenagers and 50 adolescents to fill it. The questionnaire was close ended with 10 multiple choice questions and 2 questions which required them to write the slang words they knew. It enquired about the basic idea of slang expressions. I conducted it at a school, outside a school's premises, home and the University of Karachi.

Finally in order to answer my secondary question I had informal discussions with the teachers at the school and the parents at home. While conducting this research the identity of all my participants was kept unknown and all the ethical considerations were adhered to.

### Data Analysis

This part of the paper deals with the thematic analysis of the data that collected through observation, questionnaire and informal discussions. The data collected to answer the first question deals investigating the nature of slang words used among different age groups. The data is analyzed according to the age groups.

Observation showed that children between the ages of 8 to 12 years make use of slang words at home and school. The observed dialogue between two friends at school shows the use of the terms of address children usually employ.

A: '*abeyaar, meri baat to suno!*' 'hey dude, listen to me!'

B: '*yaarkia he? Bolbhi do!*' 'what is it dude? Speak up!'

Another way of addressing a second person that I observed among children is that they take the name of their friend and add '*kebachche*' (B's son; literal meaning) along with it to emphasize it or to show anger.

A: '*B kebachche! tume~ nahi~ chhoRu~ga, tumne meri bottle toRdi.*'

'B's son! I will get you, you broke my bottle.'

B: '*chal be! menenahi~ toRi.*' 'No way! I didn't do it.'

The expression '*chal be*' does not literally mean 'no way' but it depends on the context. Sometimes it is also used to reject any idea or to imply surprise, so it depends on the context.

A: '*mene aajke match me~ do catch liye.*' 'I took two catches in today's match.'

B: '*chalbe ,jhuuTe!*' 'shut up liar!'

Another slang word that children make use of is '*chamaaT*' which means 'a slap'.

A: '*aaj mere dost ne us laRke ko ese zor se chamaaT maara ke us ka muu~TuutGaya.*'

A: 'my friend gave a tight slap to that boy that it broke his face.'

The following categories will give an overview of different slang words that children use among their friends and with their siblings. I collected 15 slang words that I observed children employed.

Children used these address terms while interacting with friends. It gives a feel of intimacy and casual attitude that friends share.

**Table 1**  
**Address Terms**

<i>abe</i>
<i>abe yaar(also used as an expression to show disappointment)</i>
<i>yaar</i>
<i>name' ke bachche</i>

Children have the habit of teasing and making fun especially at someone's physical appearance. The list shows some words that children employed in a context where they give a name to the other person on his/her physical appearance either to praise or tease.

**Table 2**  
**Slangs for Physical Appearance**

<i>chashmulla/chashmulli</i> (one who wears spectacles)
<i>haathi</i> (one who is very fat)
<i>Lash he</i> (expression used to praise something)
<i>Oye hoye</i> (exclaiming awe)

For different actions there are different slangs. I observed that children were using slang for any friend who had a specific habit.

**Table 3**  
**Slangs for Physical Appearance**

<i>chor</i> (one who borrows things and forget to return)
<i>chhoRuu</i> (one who exaggerates a lot)
<i>jhuuTe/jhuuTi</i> (one who has a habit to lie)
<i>Shikayati TaTTtu</i> (one who has the habit of complaining to the elders)

Some slangs expressions that children used included some disappointment expression and words used to reject something.

**Table 4**  
**Others**

Shit <i>yaar</i> (disappointment marker)
<i>chal be</i> (used to reject an idea or for surprise)
<i>chal</i> (used to reject an idea or for surprise)

Moving to the teenagers group (13-19 years old) if we compare it with the previous age group it has more categories and variation some of the interesting examples that I came across while observing are given below.

Two girls at schools were talking about their teachers.

A: '*humare sir itne Tharki he~ dusri miss pe line maar rahe the.*'

'Our sir is so lascivious; he was flirting with the other teacher.'

B: 'WTF! Are you serious?'

At another instance when a boy was inquired about the reason of not going to play a football match his reply was:

A: '*yaar mere tuition sir Tapakne vaale he~.*' 'man my tuition sir is about to come.'

Students discussing about their assignment had the following interaction.

A: '*beta sir ne itni saari chiize~ di~ he~ assignment me~ kese hoga?*'

'Man, sir has included so many things in our assignment. How will we do it?'

B: '*sir bohat chirand karte he~.*' 'Sir unnecessarily complicates things.'

Translation: the word *chirand* mean complicating things unnecessarily or it is also used to refer to a mess.

Another example is of a student who was inquiring about the venue of his next class from his class fellow.

A: '*yaar sir lahuu kaha~ chuuse~ ge? apne office me~ ya class me~?*'

'Where will sir drink our blood? In his office or in our class?'

Another example that I observed was a dialogue between a mother and her son.

Mother: '*kesa hoa physics ka test?*' 'how was your physics test?'

Son: '*yaar amma~ is dafa physics me top maro~ga.*' 'I will top in physics this time.'

The most common address term '*yaar*' is also commonly used by teenagers to refer to their parents and parents also use this term to address their kids sometimes. This happens in informal situation.

There is a variety of slang adjectives that teenagers use to describe the intensity of anything. For example:

A: '*bhai jaldi chal vaha~ tight qisim ka phaDDa start ho chuka he.*'

'Bro come fast, a fight just started there.'

B: '*he~ sach bata, qasam kha!*' 'What! Tell me the truth, swear on it.

The expression 'tight *he*' is used to imply the intensity of the '*phaDDa*' (fight). This expression is also used to express happiness and to praise something. Other expressions like 'fit *he*', '*lash pash*' and '*annt*' are also practiced in such situations.

There are certain expressions like '*kadu*', '*ghanTa*', '*chal be*', '*nikal lo/nikal le*' that are for rejecting an idea in disbelief or disobedience. There is no literal meaning of these expressions in English but their usage implies disapproval in general.

There is a list of almost 90 words that I have compiled and categorized after observing the slang vocabulary that teenagers use.

Teenagers also use different terms to address their peers. The reason for using these terms is to show solidarity and closeness.

**Table 5**  
**Address Terms**

<i>abe</i>
<i>bhai</i>
Boss
Bro
<i>chachcha</i>
<i>dada</i>
Dude
<i>kaake</i>
<i>oye</i>
<i>saala/saali</i>
<i>yaar</i>

I observed this category similar to the children slang. These expressions are to tease or insult a person on his/her physical appearance and teenagers frequently use these terms.



**Table 6****Slangs for Physical Appearance**

<b>Burger-</b>	someone who is westernized
<b>chhakka-</b>	an effeminate man
<b>champu-</b>	a person who looks like a fool
<b>chashmish-</b>	a girl wears spectacles
<b>chashmulla-</b>	a boy who wears spectacles
<b>chikni/chikna-</b>	refer to good looking man or woman
<b>chhoTu-</b>	a short heighted person
<b>haathi-</b>	an overweight person
Hot	
<b>lambu-</b>	a tall person
<b>ninja-</b>	one who wears a veil or hijab
<b>pe~Du-</b>	a simpleton, a villager
<b>pappu-</b>	shy or simple person
<b>ra~gaR-</b>	a person who looks ragged or messy
Sexy	
<b>Takla-</b>	bald person

Similarly ‘slang for personalities’ was another category that emerged. Teenagers have slang terms for people who have different personalities or sometimes who have a particular habit which is identified by the friends and they use slang to make fun of them.

**Table 7****Slangs for Different Personalities**

<b>andha/andhi-</b>	who is unable to see things in front
<b>bavla/bavli-</b>	a stupid person
<b>behra/behri-</b>	one who doesn't hear instantly
<b>bo~ga-</b>	a fool
<b>chamiya-</b>	a club dancer
Chatterbox	
<b>Dhakkan-</b>	a dumbass
<b>kiiRa-</b>	a pain in the ass
<b>mela/meli-</b>	a cheap person
mummy daddy	
<b>phaTTu-</b>	a person who can easily be intimidated

<b><i>phuljhaRii-</i></b>	one who teases everyone
<b><i>Tharki-</i></b>	a pervert

Some common nouns have slang alternatives as well. Teenagers use these slang nouns very often while speaking. Some examples are given below:

**Table 8**  
**Noun Forms of Slang**

<b><i>bhanD-</i></b>	mess made when one is drunk
<b><i>bhanDari-i-</i></b>	a drunk person who makes mess
<b><i>chamat-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>champa-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>chirand-</i></b>	complicate things unnecessarily
<b><i>phaDa-</i></b>	a fight
<b><i>phaDai-</i></b>	one who fights a lot

Expressions to show disappointment and disapproval that I observed were greater in number as compared to the children that is why I categorized them separately. The examples also include various English expressions as well.

**Table 9**  
**DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISAPPROVAL EXPRESSIONS**

<u>DISAPPOINTMENT EXPRESSIONS</u>
<b><i>Abe yaar</i></b>
bloody hell
holy shit
<b><i>po~kahogaya-</i></b> to abruptly end something boring like a lecture
<b><i>Shityaar</i></b>
what the hell
WTF
<u>DISAPPROVAL SLANG WORDS</u>
<b><i>chal be</i></b>
<b><i>GhanTa</i></b>
<b><i>Kaddu</i></b>
<b><i>nikal lo</i></b>

In the category below the words that describe happy mood are included. These expressions are sometimes used to imply that something is looking good.

**Table 10**  
**Describing Words**

<i>alaaT</i>
<i>annt</i>
<i>fit he</i>
<i>lash pash</i>
<i>oyehoye</i>
<i>set he</i>
<i>tight he</i>
<i>vah re vah</i>

It was interesting to observe that to abuse someone teenagers used different ethnicities. There are some qualities that are specific to ethnic groups so if a person has any similar quality he/she is abused by the label of belonging to a particular ethnic group.

**Table 11**  
**Abusive Words (based on ethnicity)**

<i>bangali</i>
<i>lyari wala</i>
<i>makraani</i>
<i>navaab</i>
<i>paThaan</i>
<i>punjabi</i>
<i>saa~i</i>

Teenagers' vocabulary also consists of a category that includes expressions for different actions. These expressions are generally used to imply an attitude that 'we are cool'. There are a variety of these expressions; some are to show attitude, some have vulgar meaning and some are to insult the other person.

**Table 12**  
**SLANGS FOR ACTIONS**

Band <i>bajana-</i>	to beat your drums
<i>bhanDhogaya-</i>	mess made
<i>bhaR me ja-</i>	to get lost
<i>bharamjhaRna-</i>	to show attitude or arrogance
<i>chirandkarna-</i>	to complicate unnecessarily
<i>choRahona-</i>	to show off
<i>dafaduur-</i>	to get lost
<i>dimaGh ki dahi karna-</i>	to annoy to limits

<i>dimaGh ki lassi karna-</i>	to annoy
<i>Lahuu chuusna-</i>	to suck one's blood
<i>pa~galena-</i>	to get into fights
<i>phaDa karna-</i>	to fight
<i>rakh k dena-</i>	to give a tight slap
Scene <i>hogaya-</i>	something happened
<i>Tafri lagana-</i>	to have fun or to pull someone's leg
<i>Topi pehnana-</i>	to deceive
<i>vaaT lagana-</i>	to insult someone or pull someone's leg

I also asked 50 teenagers to fill a questionnaire so that I get an idea of what slang is in general. *Table 13: Tabular representation of the data collected from teenagers through a questionnaire. Appendix B*

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	OPTIONS (On a Sample of 50)		
	A	B	C
SLANGIS	abusive lang.	non-standard lang.	non-academic lang.
	<b>25</b>	15	9
AGE YOU STARTED USING SLANG	(8-12 Years)	(13-19 Years)	(20-25 years)
	7	<b>39</b>	2
AGE GROUP THAT USES IT THE MOST	(18-12 Years)	(13-19 Years)	(20-25 years)
	4	<b>33</b>	13
COMFORTABLE USING SLANG WITH	Friends	Family	Relatives
	<b>47</b>	3	0
DO NOT PREFER TO USE SLANG WITH	Siblings	Parents	Elders
	0	3	<b>47</b>
SOURCE OF SLANG WORDS	Close friends	Siblings	T.V. and Movies
	<b>30</b>	2	18
EXPRESSIONS TO SHOW DISSAPOINTMENTS	Shit Yaar	Abbe Yaar	BhandHogay a
	10	<b>30</b>	10
ADDRESS A CLOSE FRIEND	Yaar	Kaake	Saale/Saali

	<b>36</b>	6	8
FIT <i>he</i> , TIGHT <i>he</i> , <i>lash pash</i> ARE MOSTLY USED WHEN	You're Happy	You praise some thing	You Fix Something
	<b>30</b>	12	8
<i>Pe~Du</i> , <i>mela</i> , <i>champu</i> MEANS A PERSON	Looks Like One	Acts Like one	Is like that
	12	<b>29</b>	9

The table shows that most teenagers thought that slang is abusive language. This shows that when they use slang their basic intention might be to abuse or tease someone. Then in response to the second question which was about the age when they started using slang, most of them thought that they started incorporating slang in their discourse during teenage (13-19 years). The third question was in relation to the second one which inquired their perspective on which age group uses slang the most and majority of them ticked the option of teenagers (13-19 years).

Fourth question was asked to see with whom do they require the use of slang and the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that they are comfortable using slang with friends. Fifth question was the opposite of the fourth one and asked the participants to specify who do they prefer not touse slang with and the answer was unanimously elders.

Sixth question was to help identify the source of the slang items and they thought they learn the slang vocabulary from close friends, television and movies.

The last four questions were designed after going through my field notes and the options given were on the basis of their repetition. Its reveals that '*abeyaar*' is a common expression to show disappointment and '*yaar*' is a common term of address. 'Fit *he*', 'tight *he*', etcetera are used to show happiness and the words '*pe~Du*', '*mela*' and '*champu*' are compliments on how a person acts and his/her personality.

In the end I will discuss the adolescence age (20-25 years) with the help of the same tools used to collect data from teenagers. The nature of slang used by this group is similar to that of teenagers except the fact that it has more variation and vulgar expressions for certain things. Some of the real life examples are discussed below.

Girls talking to each other about their dresses (context)

A; '*yaar mene itni* sexy shirt *li he*, ready-made *he*.'

'I bough a very sexy shirt, it's ready-made.'

B: '*abe uss* shop *me lash chiize~ he~*.' 'dude that shop has amazing stuff.'

The use of the word sexy has sexual connotations. This word is not accepted in our society as no one chooses to use it publically.

Another example of friends greeting each other and having a dialogue.

A: '*abe saale kal kaha~ tha? Chal aaj ice cream khila.*'

'hey man where you were yesterday? Come on buy me an ice cream.'

B: '*abechal! Apnishakaldekh he?*' 'no way! Have you seen your face?'

In this example more than one address term is used by the first speaker. The reply he gets is a disapproval of the idea and the expression, '*apni shakal dekhi he?*' (Have you seen your face?), is to insult the first speaker by implying that he does not deserve an ice cream

The next example is of friends recalling the fun they had at a party.

A: '*kalki treat bohat achchhi thi xub mufti toRa.*'

'Yesterday's treat was awesome, had plenty of free food.'

B: '*ha~ shugal raha!*' 'Yeah it was fun.'

In this example we can see that there are food slangs as well. The word '*mufta toRna*' which means 'to eat food for free especially a friend's treat is referred to as *mufta*'. There are other words like '*phoRdia*' (to eat too much), '*phaTjana*' (to burst because of eating), etcetera which I have categorized as food slang. More over the word '*shugal*' (fun or party) can be categorized as nouns in slang.

Talking about the nouns that are slangs, in the following example we can see another such example. The word '*bhanD*' (mess) is used and the one who makes mess is referred to as '*bha~Du*'.

A: '*oye yaar bhanD hogaya!*'

'man I made a mess!'

B: '*abe tum saale bha~Du! Ab kiya hogaya?*' 'you mess maker! What did you do?'

Another category that we can make is on the basis of actions. For different actions adolescents use many action slangs to make it look more stylish and fashionable. The following example has action slangs 'scene *hogaya*' (something happened; it can be good or bad) and '*laggai*' (hit). The word '*lag gai*' is also used to tease someone and has a rough tone to it which is not considered good.

A: '*kal baRa bad scene hogaya yaar! Meri gaaRi lag gai.*'

'I had a car accident yesterday.'

The slangs that are used to denote actions sometimes are vulgar when we look at their literal meaning. Like '*phaTgai*' (shitting your pants), '*Dhiili hona*' (to be scared of afraid), '*giili hogai*' (very scared or afraid), etcetera they have sexual overtones.

An overview of the nature of slang employed by the adolescents can easily be observed in the tables I have provided below; they have approximately 150 words.

The first category is common among all age groups. Adolescents address terms have many options.

**Table 14**  
**Address Terms**

	<i>chanda</i>	<i>kaake</i>
Boss	<i>sir jii</i>	<i>laale</i>
<i>abe</i>	<i>dada</i>	<i>mamu~</i>
<i>bachche</i>	<i>jaani</i>	<i>oye</i>
<i>biRu</i>	<i>jigar</i>	<i>saale/saali</i>
<i>chachcha</i>	<i>yaar</i>	

I have already discussed this category earlier. The table below shows more examples that are specific to adolescents.

**Table 15**  
**SLANGS FOR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

<i>bo~ga-</i>	a person who looks stupid
<i>chhakka-</i>	an effeminate person
<i>champu-</i>	a person who looks like a fool
<i>charsi-</i>	a drug addict
chick-	an attractive girl
<i>chikni/chikna-</i>	refer to good looking man or woman
<i>DeRhpasli-</i>	a very sleek or thin person
Hot	
Hunk	
item-	refers to an attractive girl
<i>jhakkaas-</i>	something that looks awesome usually a girl
<i>lambe/lambuutri-</i>	tall
<i>maal-</i>	similar to the word 'item'
<i>ninja-</i>	one who wears a veil or hijab
<i>pe~Du-</i>	a simpleton, a villager
<i>paTaxa-</i>	same as item or <i>jhakkaas</i>
<i>ra~gaR-</i>	a person who looks ragged or messy
<i>ramu kaka-</i>	refers to a person who looks like a servant
Sexy	
<i>takla-</i>	a bald person

<i>thakahua/thakihui-</i>	something unattractive
<i>Tuchche/Tuchchi-</i>	petty or worthless
<i>Tulla-</i>	a traffic policeman
<i>phaTichar-</i>	same as <i>Tuchchi</i>

The third category is also common among all age groups but the examples are different.

**Table 16**  
**Slangs for Different Personalities**

<i>axrot-</i>	a dumb head
<i>barsati -</i>	a person who keeps on wandering here and there
<i>botal-</i>	a dumbass
<i>chamiya-</i>	a club dancer
<i>character Dhiila-</i>	a person with a low character
<i>chariya-</i>	a fool
<i>charya-</i>	same as above
<i>chiita/chiiti-</i>	efficient
<i>Dhakan-</i>	dumbass
<i>xatamadmi-</i>	worthless
<i>kiiRa-</i>	a pain in the ass
<i>mela-</i>	a cheap person
<i>pajama-</i>	lazy person
<i>pe~du-</i>	a simple and naïve person
<i>phaTTu-</i>	a person who is intimidated easily
<i>phuljhaRi -</i>	a sharp person
<i>taaRu-</i>	one who stares especially at girls
<i>taxi-</i>	a call girl
<i>Tharki-</i>	a pervert

This category is also common among all age groups but adolescents use some western expressions which can be blasphemous in our culture.

**Table 17**  
**Disappointment and Disapproval Expressions**

<u>DISAPPOINTMENT EXPRESSIONS</u>	
<i>abeyaar</i>	
<i>baba jükaTullu-</i>	used when you get nothing out of anything
<i>bhae~skia~kh-</i>	shows shock or surprise in a negative sense



<b><i>bhae~ski Tang-</i></b>	same as above
bloody hell	
<b><i>chal be</i></b>	
holy cow	
holy shit	
<b><i>Shityaar</i></b>	
what the hell	
WTF	
<u>DISAPPROVAL EXPRESSIONS</u>	
<b><i>chal be</i></b>	
<b><i>chalphuT le</i></b>	
<b><i>GhanTa</i></b>	
<b><i>kaddu</i></b>	
<b><i>nikal lo</i></b>	
<b><i>shaaThojao</i></b>	

This category is also discussed and is common category of both teenagers and adolescents.

**Table 18**  
**Noun Slangs**

<b><i>rapTa-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>bhanD-</i></b>	mess
<b><i>bhanDu-</i></b>	mess maker
<b><i>chamaat-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>champa-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>chanra/chanri-</i></b>	boyfriend/girlfriend
<b><i>chanRebazi-</i></b>	an affair
crap	
<b><i>lafa-</i></b>	a slap
<b><i>naRa-</i></b>	a lazy person
<b><i>pa~ga-</i></b>	a fight
<b><i>pachka-</i></b>	mess
<b><i>panoti-</i></b>	bad luck
<b><i>phaDa-</i></b>	a fight
<b><i>phaDai-</i></b>	one who fights
<b><i>po~ka-</i></b>	surprise went wrong
<b><i>popat-</i></b>	stupid or worthless
<b><i>rokRa-</i></b>	money

scene	
<i>shoda-</i>	a show off
<i>shugal-</i>	fun
<i>tafri-</i>	party
<i>thobRa-</i>	head

The category below is a unique one. Adolescents use slang for food as well. This is common when they are out having lunch with friends.

**Table 19**  
**Food Slangs**

<i>charna-</i>	eating repeatedly
<i>chaayepani-</i>	hi tea
<i>manDkekhaya-</i>	to eat a lot
<i>mufta-</i>	free food
<i>phaTgaya/phaTgai-</i>	eating a lot
<i>phoRdia-</i>	to eat a lot

Adolescents genuinely abuse by using derogatory words that are considered very impolite.

**Table 20**  
**Abusive Slang Words**

Bitch	
<i>chaae-</i>	stupid or dumbass
<i>harami</i>	
<i>kambaxat</i>	
<i>kamiina/kamiini</i>	
<i>lanat he-</i>	to curse
<i>ullukapaTha</i>	
yo nigga	

Slang for different actions are usually rude expressions that are sexually charged or they are vulgar. Many of such expressions are common and they are a part of adolescent daily repertoire. Majority of them do not know the literal meaning of these expressions but they use it to keep a persona that they carry.

**Table 21**  
**Words Describing Actions**

<i>(also include some vulgar expressions)</i>	
<b>sulagjana-</b>	smouldering with anger.
<b>lalthogai-</b>	same as above
<b>bhinoThojana-</b>	to get angry instantly
<b>moqepchoka-</b>	to hit at the right time
<b>Dhiilihojana- to be afraid</b>	
<b>giilihojana-</b>	wetting one's pants
<b>piilihojana-</b>	shiting in one's pants
<b>lambichoRna-</b>	to exaggerate
<b>pan kidokan-</b>	same as above
<b>lapaeT lo-</b>	same as above
<b>bho~pu band kar-</b>	to ask someone to shut up
<b>battiigulhona-</b>	blank
<b>suTTalagana-</b>	to smoke
<b>dimaGchuuslena-</b>	to irritate someone
<b>unglikarna-</b>	to interrupt
<b>Bandbajana-</b>	noisy place
set <b>he-</b>	when something is fine
fit <b>he-</b>	great
<b>Scenehogaya-</b>	something happened
<b>tafriilagana-</b> leg pulling	
<b>bho~kna-</b>	to bark
<b>bakvaskarna-</b>	to speak
<b>lae li-</b>	<i>to tease someone</i>
<b>hatgai-</b> to	annoy someone
<b>phatgai-</b>	to be afraid of something
<b>shaaThoja-</b>	to get lost
<b>Topikarana-</b>	to deceive someone
<b>DanDakarana-</b>	to interfere or to give a lesson to someone

The category of describing words discussed in the teenage list is also a part of the adolescent vocabulary but I have not mentioned it here to avoid repetition.

Fifty adolescents were also asked to fill in the same questionnaire that was given to the teenagers.

Table22: Tabular representation of the data collected from adolescents through questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	OPTIONS (On a Sample of 50)		
	A	B	C
SLANG IS	abusive lang.	non-standard lang.	non-academic lang.
	10	33	7
AGE YOU STARTED USING SLANG	(8-12 Years)	(13-19 Years)	(20-25 years)
	7	22	21
AGE GROUP THAT USES IT THE MOST	(18-12 Years)	(13-19 Years)	(20-25 years)
	0	28	22
COMFORTABLE USING SLANG WITH	Friends	Family	Relatives
	45	5	0
DO NOT PREFER TO USE SLANG WITH	Siblings	Parents	Elders
	2	4	44
SOURCE OF SLANG WORDS	Close friends	Siblings	T.V. and Movies
	21	10	19
EXPRESSIONS TO SHOW DISSAPOINTMENTS	Shit Yaar	Abbe Yaar	bhandHogay a
	13	28	9
ADDRESS A CLOSE FRIEND	Yaar	Kaake	Saale/Saali
	31	9	10
FIT <i>he</i> , TIGHT <i>he</i> , <i>lash pash</i> ARE MOSTLY USED WHEN	You're Happy	You praise some thing	You Fix Something
	10	31	9
<i>pe~Du, mela, champu</i> MEANS A PERSON	Looks Like One	Acts Like one	Is like that
	22	16	12

The table shows that only three questions were answered differently the rest were the same. The first question about what slang is was mostly answered as a non-standard variety of language. The last two questions were also marked differently by the adolescents. They thought that expressions like fit *he*, tight *he*, etcetera are used to praise something and the words *pae~Du, champu*, etcetera are used for peoples' looks.

To answer my supplementary question I had an informal discussion with the teachers and some parents to find out what they think about the slang that is common these days. Most of the parents were of the view that there are so many slang expressions whose meanings they are not familiar with. A parent said:

Frankly most of the time I do not have the slightest idea of what my kids are saying because of those modern expressions that they use. I think they have their own world and its language.

Another parent was of the view that, 'I usually do not get the terms kids use nowadays but sometimes I comprehend their meaning through the context.'

Discussion with a teacher she said that being a teacher it was her job to interact with the students so she updated herself with these slang words that her students use. She added further that she knew the meanings of the slang expressions but never used such terms when she was of their age.

A parent added further to this point by saying:

'In our times children who used slang were considered bold and we preferred not to be friends with them.'

While discussing this point, few parents said that previously idioms were used to express ideas which are communicated through slang nowadays. They added that idioms had a literary status but the function was similar to slang; to create humor and to imply an idea.

Some parents that I met believed that parents should use slang with their children to stay close to them and maintain a friendly bond with them. This will also reduce the communication gap between parents and their children.

The discussion also sheds some light on the source of the slang words according to the elders. One parent believes:

The Indian content on-air on our T.V's has completely destroyed children language. Sometimes children are unable to distinguish between Urdu and Hindi.

Few parents said that movies in general are a source of slang words. Some teachers said that as they observe students outside their home they thought that the company a child keeps also had a great influence on his/her language. So we can also say that close friends are a huge source of slang vocabulary.

## Conclusion

The data analysis proves that there is a certain trend in the use of slang. Taking age as a variable revealed the nature of slang and the variation which comes with age. The findings show that children start using slang at a very basic level. Adolescents integrate slang in their conversation in the same way as teenagers, the difference is that the adolescent slang vocabulary is more modified and extensive. The expressions used by

teenagers undergo slight changes, sometimes a touch of vulgarity and indecency to become a part of adolescent slang. Findings show that like teenagers, adolescents also make use of a good deal of slang though there are differences in nature and categories of slang used by the two age groups. Discussion with elders, parents and teachers revealed that the use of slang is so common nowadays that people have no reservations against its use they have become clichés. The research does not provide an extensive list of slang words but as an attempt is made to gather as many as possible. This paper raises the questions regarding the future of standard Urdu in our society.

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## APPENDIX

### A-Transcription Note

This is a key to understand different sound of the words discussed in the paper.

***Bold and italicized-*** Urdu words

***a (agar)*** if

***aa (aap)*** you {long vowel sound}

***i (pichhle)*** previous

***ii (tiisra)*** third {long vowel sound}

***u (mujhe)*** me

***uu (maujuud)*** present {long vowel sound}

***ch (chiiz)*** thing

***chh (chhoTi)*** small {h for aspiration}

***t (tiin)*** 3 three

***T (beTho)*** sit {aspirated}

***d (das)*** 10 ten

***D (DanDi)*** stick

***g (gaaRi)*** car

***G (Ghalat)*** wrong {h for aspiration}

***r (roTi)*** chapati

***R (ghaRi)*** watch

***sh (shuru)*** start

***x (xayal)*** care

***v (vaha~)*** there

***~*** is used for nazalization



**B- Questionnaire**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

AIM: The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the nature of slang used among different age groups. Your Identity will be kept confidential.

SECTION A: Circle the best answer from the options given below each question.

1. What do you understand by the word 'slang'?  
a. abusive words    b. non-standard variety of language    c. non-academic language
2. At what age did you start using slang?  
a. 8-12 years    b. 13-19 years    c. 20-25 years
3. According to you which age group uses slang the most?  
a. 8-12 years    b. 13-19 years    c. 20-25 years
4. With whom are you more comfortable with the use of slang language?  
a. friends    b. family    c. relatives
5. With who would you prefer NOT to use slang language?  
a. siblings    b. parents    c. elders
6. According to you from where do you learn the informal words like '*yaar*', 'shit', '*chamat*', '*bakvas*', etc?  
a. close friends    b. siblings    c. T.V and movies
7. When you are disappointed in someone or with something which word do you often use to express your anger?  
a. shit *yaar*    b. *abeyaar*    c. *bhanDhogaya*
8. How do you address your close friend in an informal situation?  
a. *yaar*    b. *kaake*    c. *saale/saali*

Under what circumstances expressions like 'fit *he*', 'tight *he*', '*lashpash*' are used the most? When:

- a. you are happy    b. you praise something    c. you fix something
9. If you call a friend '*pe~du*', '*mela*', '*champu*', '*pappu*', etc, is it because the friend:  
a. looks like one    b. acts like one    c. is like that

SECTION B:

1. Make a list of the slang words that you use frequently.
2. Make a list of slang words that you remember others using.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION