# Appropriation of Western Culture in South-Asian Media and Its Socio-Cultural Impact on ESL Learners

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History	Media is considered a society's spokesperson, representing all of the society's socio-cultural norms and traditions. Furthermore, it attempts to
Received:	diagnose all societal problems as well as their solutions. Media is an active
April 17, 2022	source of laying bare multifaceted realities of a particular society. This study aims to prove that the media in developing nations sometimes
Accepted:	appropriates Western culture, which directly impacts society's social and
November 19, 2022	cultural norms. This study examines how the appropriation of western culture in South-Asian media affects learners' cultural, moral, and
Keywords :	psychological well-being. It also seeks to determine whether it has a good or
Appropriation, Western	bad impact on the learners. The qualitative approach has been applied in
Culture, South-Asian	this study to find out how the appropriation of western culture in South-
Media, Socio-Cultural	Asian media affects ESL learners. This is purely qualitative research,
Impact, Learners	including information gathered from books, journals, an open-ended questionnaire, and interviews. This research shows that appropriation of
DOI:	Western culture has a significant impact on Eastern culture which leads
10.5281/zenodo.7339613	towards hybrid culture. This hybridity can become one of the reasons for cultural changes in society, and at the same time, it directly affects the learner's learning process. The effects can be seen in their personal lives,
	morals, and cultural beliefs. The researchers aim to show that cultural
	hybridity results in cultural transformation.

# Introduction

Globalization has affected the masses across the world under the umbrella of the capitalist economic system (Awan, 2016). This economic system has tried to develop a unified elite culture in the elite class of every postcolonial country through the concept of free trade (Eyal, et al, 1998). The foods brands, cosmetic brands, electric brands, and clothing brands have changed the ways of thinking of the natives in Pakistan (Islam, et al, 2019). The appropriation and adaptation of these brands have hybridized and even changed the thinking of the natives (Wang &Yeh, 2005). Sometimes they are confused between western culture and natives' culture (Sardar, 1998). This free-trade economy concept has not only promoted free trade but also promoted trans-cultural promotion and transmission (Gallagher & Robinson, 1953).

The appropriation of western media has changed the standards of the natives (Rogers, 2006). It has directly affected the social standards of the natives. Society will gradually transform from collectivism to individualism on which the capitalist economic base (Steele & Lynch, 2013). Not only is the individual responsible for his or her good and bad behaviors, but the concept of individualism will also be central to moral ethics (Vincent, 2018). This has affected the whole subcontinent.

The differences in culture can be seen between South Asian urban and rural communities (Neuman, et al, 2014). Media has aided in the construction of variation between cities and the countryside (Bruce & Levin, 1997). On the one hand, villagers live a simple life in their fields; on the other hand, cities are tremendously busy, with seeds of materialism growing everywhere (Boski, 2006). On the one hand, the mechanical life is a result of the demands of city living, while on the other hand, the media has pushed up the lives of metropolitan communities (Lynn & Bennett, 1980).

Globalization has had a direct impact on the lives of people all around the world (Passas, 2000). Individuals have gotten increasingly engaged in engaging with the outside world (Ohmer, et al, 2009). Globalization has popularized the idea of a capitalist society in which everyone works for the benefit of the capital (Amin, 2014). The hunt for money has spawned smart cities and cultures all over the world, where capital rules all aspects of human life (Osella, Ferro &Pautasso, 2016). Money has acquired the reputation of a mini-god throughout the world, particularly in poor countries where people are willing to give their lives for the sake of money (Chiweshe, 2019). On the one hand, this materialism has encouraged pleasures in people's lives, but on the other side, it has generated restlessness in people's lives (Coole& Frost, 2010). Some historians believe that the appropriation of western culture in eastern countries is the source of this unrest (Chen, 2002).

On the one hand, the appropriation of western culture in eastern media has had a direct impact on eastern society and culture, while on the other hand, it has established imperialist supremacy (Hackett, 1998). Eastern minds are dominated by clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and western brands (Frith, Shaw & Cheng, 2005). Eastern societies are dominated by Western lifestyles (Farver, et al, 2009). This adoption of western culture, social conventions, and customs has hybridized eastern countries while simultaneously casting doubt on their culture and identity (Miazhevich, 2009). The locals have lost track of the difference between global and national culture. These two types of cultures are opposed (Chow, Harootunian& Miyoshi, 1996).

Because these two cultures are founded on separate foundations, ESL students are confused between international norms and their local ways of life. One could say that native culture is built on historical beliefs, but global culture is the result of modern living and thinking (Robbins, 2007). The native and foreign culture has created hybrid thinking in the minds of the natives (Radcliffe & Laurie, 2006). The introduction of western civilization has altered not just the natives' manner of life, but also their clothing and food (Burkitt, 1973).

It is possible to see socio-cultural influences on ESL students (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006). Their moral beliefs, cultural customs, clothing, eating, food, and even family life have all been influenced by this appropriation (Thompson &Haytko, 1997). The inculcation of foreign culture destroys the moralities established by national religions (Mosse, 2003). The global culture has a negative impact on ESL students' moralities. Many researchers believe that the inculcation of a foreign culture reduces the amount of respect among family members (Tomasello&Vaish, 2013).

Multilingual and multicultural societies are present in South Asia. They have an uncanny ability to learn foreign cultures quickly (Trueba, 1999). The fact that the English language has been indigenized in so many other languages around the world is undeniable. The indigenization of the English language is resulting in both linguistic and cultural changes (Mufwene, 1997).

## **Literature Review**

Culture is vital to a society's well-being. Because of the media, westernization has permeated throughout Pakistan. The new generation's personalities are being exploited by the media nowadays. It depicts the western world in such a gleaming light that anyone can fall prey to it. It encourages young people to imitate western culture in the guise of progress (Ashraf, n.d).

Schiller (1976) proposed the term "cultural imperialism" to explain how the people of South-Asian countries view media that are saturated with western culture. The civilizations of these countries begin to follow Western culture, which results in destroying their own culture.

There is an appropriation of Western culture in South-Asian media. When one culture dominates the culture of another region, it is known as cultural imperialism. Media plays a vital role by enthralling viewers with entertaining cultural products, pop music, modern dressing, and food. Individual cultures are being destroyed by media, which is considered a modern form of imperialism (Naseer et al., 2014).

A considerable number of studies have been done on the appropriation of Western culture in the media of various countries. Kraidy (2002) did a study on the media's role in cultural globalization. Culture's globalization is frequently attributed to worldwide media. How would youths in South-Asian countries adopt a Western lifestyle of Nike shoes, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and pop music if they didn't have access to global media? As a result, mass media is said to have a significant impact on cultural globalization.

Kraidy's (2002) essay opens with a comprehensive survey of interdisciplinary hybridity research. The theme of hybridity is then revisited in the context of a series of pieces on cultural globalization. The term "hybridity" is used to describe how American popular culture is received around the world. The rhetoric integrated throughout these texts encourages critical deconstruction. This paper argues that hybridity is a conceptual need.

Kui and Lai (2006) conducted a study on the effect of culture on second language learning. The objective of this study was to explain the inextricable link between culture and language, as well as instructional methodologies for teaching a second language through culture. Culture must be explicitly included as an integral part of second language learning and teaching. Students will be successful in learning a target language only if cultural issues become an integral component of the curriculum.

Riaz and Arif (2007) looked into the impact of foreign TV shows on young generations' lifestyles. Culture and media are thought to be inextricably linked. The dominating media's cultural influence has been recognized all over the world. Globalization of the media has put national identities in jeopardy. The purpose of this study was to look at the influence of foreign entertainment TV shows on Pakistani youth's culture. The study's participants were university students from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The outcomes of the study significantly support the hypothesis that foreign entertainment television programs have a significant impact on the youth's culture.

In his research, Akbar (2009) looked at the cultural invasion of Western media into Muslim countries. Culture transmission and the media are interconnected. Media greatly influences cultural values and conventions. The Western media has an advantage over the media of other countries. As a result, media aids in

the spread of Western culture to Muslim communities. This study explores how through the use of media, Western culture invades Muslim cultures. It also considers possible solutions to the media's cultural invasion.

Khan and Arif (2009) in their project researched the impact of Western media on Pakistani culture. Pakistan is one of the South-Asian countries that is experiencing Western cultural appropriation as a result of international media. This study aimed to identify and assess cultural aspects of entertainment shows shown on Pakistani private television channels, as well as determine how much they had influenced Multan's youth. For this reason, the effects of foreign channels on Pakistani culture have been investigated. The findings of a poll show that it is affecting and transforming the attitudes of young people towards Pakistani culture.

Derderian-Aghajanian and Wang (2012) investigated how culture influences the outcomes of English language learners. Immigrant students may experience distinct problems, preconceptions, and other issues depending on their culture. Immigrant students from China and the Middle East confront difficulty in three areas: language, culture, and academics. Other issues, such as immigrant students' prejudices, pose a difficulty to their English literacy learning. This study compared the cultures of China with the Middle East to see how culture influences the outcome of English learners. The findings reveal the difficulties that these pupils encounter. The report ends with suggestions for how schools and instructors might better meet the requirements of immigrant EEL kids from various cultures.

Naseer et al. (2014) researched the influence of media on the appropriation of Western culture among the youth of Pakistan. The study looked at cultural appropriation. Western media is eroding Pakistani citizens' cultural boundaries, altering ordinary citizens' views and dreams, and thinking. Youth represents the culture in any society. The study's goals were to look at people's perceptions of international media and how they influence our cultural patterns. The descriptive method was utilized for this objective. The study's participants were 150 students. The findings show that international media has a considerable negative influence on young people. It has been discovered that Western media has a detrimental impact in changing Pakistani people's lifestyles, languages, moral values, dressing, and eating habits.

Hejazi and Fatemi (2015) explored the effect of cultural appropriation on Iranian EFL students. The findings demonstrated that learners were disconnected from Iranian culture as a result of their familiarity with the English language and culture; hence, the hypothesis that familiarity with Western culture would reduce the effect of local culture was confirmed. Students exhibited a preference for Western culture. The outcomes of this study can be useful not just in terms of English language education, but also in terms of socio-cultural viewpoints that are concerned with human characteristics.

Hassen (2016), through his study, investigated the part played by media in encouraging traditional cultures. The study's findings revealed that indigenous cultures are connected with backwardness, whereas Western cultures are regarded as modern. Media can help to prevent the Western culture from washing away the indigenous cultures of Nigeria.

Sibani (2018) in his project studied whether the western culture had a positive or negative effect on the African culture. The study suggests that cultural restoration is urgently needed to prevent the extinction of African culture.

Rana and Chisti (2019) found out how students' performance is affected by cultural change. Pakistani society has a long history of cultural change. In the decades following independence, society was subjected to a variety of cultural dominance. Islamic culture has been continuously dominated by Western culture, particularly in Pakistan's urban areas, as a result of globalization and media activity since the 1990s. Religion, customs, norms, and other aspects of life differ greatly between the two cultures. These developments have a significant impact on Pakistani society, particularly the youth. The goal of this study was to look into the impact of western culture's positive and negativity on university students, as well as to offer recommendations for how to proceed in this situation. The study's findings revealed that the negative aspects of western culture outweigh the beneficial parts of this culture. The researchers made numerous recommendations based on their findings, including how to deal with this issue and how pupils might gain from Western culture while avoiding its negative features.

Most studies have been done on the appropriation of Western culture in the media of different countries. In Pakistan, very few studies have been done on the appropriation of Western culture in Pakistani media. No study has been done on the appropriation of Western culture in South-Asian media and its impact on Pakistani ESL learners. Therefore, it is of relevance to explore the appropriation of Western culture in Pakistani media and its socio-cultural impact on ESL learners.

#### **Research Methodology**

The researchers have collected data through the questionnaire as well as interviews. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to different graduate and postgraduate colleges of the Punjab province. The questionnaire was composed of unrestricted questions. Unrestricted questions were also included in the questionnaire to probe more deeply into the feelings of the respondents on that specific matter. An in-depth analysis of emotions is sometimes very helpful in collecting pertinent data. As these questions are open-ended, therefore, they have more potential to dig out the real situation. Unrestricted questions are a bit tricky to compile but researchers preferred to add those in the document to know respondents' degree of reliance on western media/channels in their daily lives.

The researchers found it important to conduct interviews as well. They selected 40 students and 20 resource persons who were facilitating them in ESL classrooms for taking interviews. This selection was also from different colleges of Punjab. Interviews helped the researchers to gather respondents' stances on the proposed matter in an effective manner.

## **Data Analysis**

The present research specifically aimed at finding the impact of western media on ESL learners in Pakistan. Here the western media refers to the foreign news channels, entertainment channels including English movies, dramas, and talk shows, etc. Pakistan is among the postcolonial countries that had accepted the cultural change received from their colonial masters to a great extent. It can be seen in language, dresses, and other ways of life. The research intended to show the impact of western powers on the social and cultural life of Pakistani ESL learners. For this purpose, the researchers chose few renowned boys' and girls' colleges to collect data. Students were randomly selected for the interviews. Although the data was collected randomly yet it has been mentioned in the article in a specific order stating social, cultural, moral, and ideological norms one by one.

Social Norms: Social norms are those rules which are unwritten but still are implied to society to lead a normal life. These rules provide an expected set of norms according to which people behave in a certain manner. It also tells that what type of influence can be expected in a particular situation. Conformity is another significant term used while evaluating the concept of social norms. It can be referred to as a type of social influence which a social group accepts just to fit in another social group. The change can be due to the influence of a physical group or it can be the result of some imagined group's pressure. The researchers selected learners were interviewed to know about their knowledge and the influence of foreign social norms in their daily lives. Each social group has a particular set of social norms followed in that society. Pakistani society approves certain types of social norms as honor, respect dignity, faith, patriotism, collectivism, generosity. Researchers when inquired about all the above-mentioned types of social norms, found a considerable influence of Western mindset on their minds. It was found that the appropriation of Western culture through media had a negative impact on ESL learners. Pakistani society is highly concerned about the concepts of honor (izzat), respect (ghairat), dignity (azmat). These norms have quite different descriptions and implications in western society. Learners were asked about their views on above mentioned social norms, the replies they gave helped the researchers to know their mindset. It was found that they appreciated Pakistani social norms but also liked to break free from the traditions and norms. Further questioning explored that they had acquired the change in social behavior due to their reliance on western schools of thought in this regard.

Ethical Norms: The compiled data of the questionnaire and the interviews showed that 80% of the respondents thought that the western way of life had a considerable influence on their life. Greetings are an important way of evaluating any culture; it tells about the traditional norms and customs that how much a nation is warm or formal in its greetings. Pakistanis are usually warm in greetings. They like to hug when meeting their friends and family. But it was shown under the influence they rarely hug but prefer to shake hands with close relations as well greeting words like 'salaam' and 'Allah Hafiz' were replaced by 'hello', 'hi', and' bye'. In Pakistani culture, usually the words like 'sahib 'and, 'sahiba', is used to address male or female respectively. It was found by the researchers that these words were replaced by Mr. and Miss. Strangers in Pakistani society prefer to converse in formal Urdu, however, researchers discovered an influence of western language in this situation, as they chose to converse with speakers in English rather than Urdu. The same was found while talking to children at home, whether they belong to the middle class or the upper class. Although they informally talk to them yet they like to use the medium of English. Pakistani masses seem to believe that the English language and culture is not only a status symbol but also stands as proof of being knowledgeable.

Another significant trait of Pakistani culture is that they give extra regard to elders. They greet them first when entering the home. The compiled data shows that this tradition was also affected by the western style. Elders were not given that level of regard that was once a routine practice in society. It was seen that almost 15% of families took them as a burden on their finances. It was also observed that traditional words like 'nano', 'daado', 'ami', 'abu' were replaced by granny, grand-pa, mama and papa, etc.

*Change in Gender Role:* Under the influence of western media, a change in gender roles was also observed. Pakistan is an Islamic state, where people follow Islamic ways of life, rules, and regulations as mentioned in the Holy Quran. When respondents' responses were compiled, it was revealed that 60% were in favor of women who go out of their homes for the job. Islam gives this responsibility to men to earn for their families and women are supposed to stay at home to take care of their children at home. Western teachings have inculcated the idea in the mind of men as well as women that there is no harm if a woman wants to adopt a profession and work equally as men do. Women have their rights given to them by Islamic law but under a westernized way of thinking, they demand equal rights. Therefore, a transformation is found in almost all fields of life.

*Ideological Norms:* Research shows that under the influence of western media there are many ideological changes as well in the socio-cultural environment of Pakistan. Pakistani society is known for its custom of living in the joint family system but after taking inspiration from the imperial version of reality as depicted in western dramas, movies, and other types of programs, Pakistanis have also started opposing the joint family system.

A major shift was also observed in Pakistani ESL learners' preferences of their approach toward life. They appreciated the materialistic approach towards life and used the word 'practical' for it. Appropriation of western culture has affected the natives psychologically. In the present age, the imperialistic effect can be seen almost in all fields of life. The colonial effect is still rampant in all fields of life in once colonized nations. The age of technology has made it very easy for western hegemony to be established in the Pakistani community. Technological advancement has altered the views of Pakistani society about recreation and happiness also. They like to go to malls and other commercial options offered to them in the name of recreation. The majority likes to go to such places, not to parks where the natural environment was once their preference.

#### Conclusion

The present research was aimed at finding the traces of the influence of western media on the lives of Pakistani natives. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews of ESL learners and resource persons from different colleges of Punjab, helped the researchers to establish that western hegemony is rampant in Pakistani society through western media. In the present age of technology, it is convenient as well as effective to take inspiration from outside. The research concluded that an influence of other forces has a considerable impact on the natives' psyche. Change in social behavior is a natural phenomenon. Researchers maintained that change in social behavior has double-sided effects. On the one hand, it shakes natives' belief in tradition and norms, and on the other hand, it provides them with an opportunity to learn new ways of life borrowed from a foreign culture.

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