

“SIGNIFICANCE OF SOUND IN FILMMAKING AND CHALLENGES FACED BY PAKISTANIS”

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ABSTRACT

This research article investigates the significance of sound in the filmmaking process and the specific challenges faced by the Pakistani film industry in this domain. Commencing with an examination of Pakistan's music industry, notably exemplified by projects such as Coke Studio, the study elucidates the historical trajectory of sound within cinematic contexts, tracing its origins from Thomas Edison's Phonograph to the pre-partition era of cinema in Lahore. Despite the nation's rich musical heritage, the research underscores the impediments encountered by Pakistani filmmakers concerning sound recording, mixing, and studio infrastructure development. Employing qualitative research methodologies, the study conducts an in-depth analysis of the present state of sound production in Pakistani cinema, facilitated by interviews with industry experts. It elucidates the transition towards internalized sound mixing processes while highlighting enduring challenges, including the scarcity of adequate sound studios, reliance on antiquated equipment, and financial constraints. Moreover, the research delves into technological complexities, software utilization, and sound mixing techniques within the industry's current landscape. In conclusion, the study advocates for enhancements in sound production infrastructure, alongside investments in modern technologies and educational opportunities for sound producers. Emphasizing the necessity of addressing these challenges and prioritizing sound quality in filmmaking endeavors, the research posits that such measures can significantly augment the cinematic experience in Pakistan. By offering a comprehensive analysis of this often-overlooked facet of filmmaking, the study furnishes valuable insights conducive to the future advancement of the Pakistani film industry.

Keywords: filmmaking, cinema, sound production, sound quality, production

INTRODUCTION:

In the contemporary scenario, Pakistani music industry is doing wonders in form of multitude of music projects (Arshad, 2018). Coke Studio has been a major hit in this

era of technological advancement. Musicians all across Pakistan, have gathered on the platform of Coke studio and are presenting a diverse range of songs. However, the sounds in the film industry are still in its growth phase and experiencing sound management and studio development challenges.

Reviewing the history of cinema development original sound recording and management, it has been found that Thomas Edison is recognized as the founder of cinema, with his early film Fred Ott's Sneeze that was launched in 1894 (Gunning, 1989). He was the inventor of Phonograph, in 1877, which is the first sound recording device. Dickson, on the other hand, assisted Thomson, in synchronizing sound and film, but experienced failure. In the pre-partition era, Dialsukh M. Pancholi, was recognized as a popular Hollywood movie distributor. Pancholi Art Pictstudio was initially developed by him in Lahore and was recognized as Pancholi Film Co (Siddique 2017).

This studio produced mega hit Punjabi movies; Yamla Jatt (1940), Gul Bakavli (1939) and the Khazanchi (1941) which is an incredible Urdu/Hindi musical film. All the film studio's in Lahore, were destroyed due to political upheavals of that era. Pancholi rebuilt his studio on the Upper Mall Road of Lahore during February, 1948 (Pakistan Film Magazine, 2018). Later on, DeevanSardari Lal, an assistant of Pancholi, launched the first Pakistani film; "Teri Yaad" (1948). Malika Pukhraj, famous Pakistani singer, took the charge of Pancholi studios, and named it as Malika Studio. After sometime, Malika Pukhraj sold the studio which was then recognized as Jawidan Studio. Since then, Pakistani film industry has experienced many ups and downs (Dudrah, 2002; Kirk, 2016; Yousaf, Adnan, & Aksar, 2017). It is after 1965, that the Pakistani actors started to present their films across the borders. Notably, the film that was produced in Pakistan, was Shahida, featured Dilip Kumar's brother, Nasir Khan. Likewise, after decades of film industry development, Muhammad Ali, a Pakistani actor, got featured as a clerk of Manoj Kumar, an Indian actor. Mohsin Khan, Qatil Shifai, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Haseena Moin are big names of Pakistani film industry, they were welcomed by the Bollywood, 1980 onwards. Pakistani singers as Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Atif Aslam are recognized as renowned performers in Bollywood. In 2019, there are 4633 artists working, 977 cinemas and approximately 9266 film songs produced (Pakistani Film Magazine, 2018). A number of Cinema's exist in Karachi; Capri, Nishat, Prince, Atrium, etc, with Capri cinema having 850 seating capacity and 7.1 Dolby sound system.

The term "sound" in the discipline of film making refers to the music, sound effects and words (Costanzo, 2017; Wilkins, 2016). Sound play a significant role in a movie. For instance, it helps in enhancing the plot, elevating the mood, serves as an explanation of film characters, provides relevant information regarding scene location, etc (Candusso, 2015; Wierzbicki, 2012). Empirically, sound can be classified as; Non-diegetic and Diegetic. In Diegetic sound, the sounds as door slamming, dialogue, and footsteps, etc. can be added. These audio facets come from sources that exist within the film world. However, the non-diegetic sound is inclusive of a source that comes from outside the film functional world (Savukova, 2010). For instance; the sound effects of screeches in shower scene recorded in film "Psycho". Some of the

filmmakers exhaust the sound to amplify the meaning or emotion in a movie scene. The character's threatening feature is reinforced in front of the audience. These exaggerated sounds are known as Pleonastic sounds.

These sound effects add flavors to the ecosphere or mood of the film, via the generation of a soundscape (Conde, 2017). These further, enhance the meaning of visuals that appear during the scene. Filmmakers alter the tempo, volume and pitch of these sounds, on the basis of his expectations from the audience, to respond to the noise in a certain manner (Mott, 2014; Tan, Pfordresher, & Harré, 2017). For example, in the horror movies, squealing tires or screams are high-pitched sounds, that create a sense of anxiety among the audience. On the contrary, a sense of calmness or mystery can be generated via low-pitched sounds. For instance, the swinging of a door, bird's voice, and sound of waves, etc. Nevertheless, the most captivating use of sound in a movie scene, is the absence of sound i.e., silence. Silence is often generated to augment a scene's intensity or to create suspense for an imminent doom. In the contemporary film industry, sound effects as phase blasts, animal and wind sounds are added to enhance the film experience (Wilkins, 2016). In the contemporary scenario, surround sound has been integrated to the film industry as a "directional" facet (Sheehan, 2018). For instance, the addition of echoes, a type of surround sound, gives an impression of three-dimensional sense of movie space. Another category of sound is known as unmotivated sound. These sound effects, has no logical connection with the scene, although they elevate and enhance emotional influence of the movie scene.

Methodology

A qualitative research methodology has been adopted in this research. The film producers and singers have been interviewed and analysis has been presented. Convenient sampling strategy has been adopted and as per the convenience the selected film producers and singers have been interviewed.

Analysis

A productive change can be seen in the Pakistani film industry. The sound mixing is now performed in Pakistan, but previously, people had to go to international locations as America, to record their sound and go through the procedure of sound mixing. Kashif Ejaz is working with the Pakistani film industry. He remained engaged for sound mixing etc, in Actor in Law, Namaloom Afraad, Teefa in Trounble, movies sound mixing. The sound effects in the aforementioned movies are of a high standard, and can be heard through the microphones. There are two types of sound mixing; mono channel and stereo channel.

The contemporary music directors in Pakistan works on Keyboard, however, the actual feel comes from real equipment's as Tabla and Violin. These instruments on the key board give fake music impacts. During interviews with Shuja Haider, Faizi and Ahmed Jahanzaib, it was found that these singers are mature, but still they rely on the keyboard. On the contrary, the singers like Bilal Maqsood, Shahi (Vital Sign) and Imran Kazim, as remarkable Music Directors mentioned that Orchrushna is the best tool that must be integrated.

However, during the interviews the biggest challenge faced by the film industry has been recognized. In Pakistan, there are limited number of sound studios; Radio Pakistan, Coke Studio, Pakistan Television Studio. There is no studio to record private production in Pakistan. Previously developed studio namely; Greece was initially a warehouse of Pepsi. This studio is not sound proof, and has mikes that are over sensitive. The singers mentioned that for Mehdi Hasan, a special mike was developed due to his low pitch. He was a remarkable semi-classical singer and a special mike was developed for him. Arguably, in Pakistan, singers like Shuja Haider and Ahmed Jahanzaib, are recognized as better singers than the Indian/Asian ones. It is obvious by the fact, with Pakistani singers outperform are in Indian events and conduct live concerts.

They outperform the Indian singers. Another challenge faced by the sound industry, is that the young Pakistani singers are not valued. They perform at small level, and paid less than they actually deserved for. There is huge talent in Pakistan and the Pakistan singers are experts in playing guitar, keyboard playing.

One of the interviewee highlighted that there are different types of music directors; tuner/composer and arranger. In Audio Dialogue Replacement (ADR), the dialogues are recorded first, and then during the shoot, the actors are asked to say those dialogues exactly in the same manner. Across, the globe, the sound in a movie is recorded between 5.1 or 7.1, Dolby surround sound and then it is converted into Digital Cinema Package (DCP) format so that it could be played in the Cinema. Unfortunately, Pakistani film industry is unable to record the sounds in between 5.1 or 7.1 Dolby. Rafiq Ghaznavi introduced the concept of Background Music Score (BGM). Sound mixing takes place via a number of steps. The Film Producers and Directors, working since 2000, in Pakistan, still rely on the Automatic Dialogue Replacement. The challenge is that Pakistan does not have the needed equipment. Nabeel Qureshi and Jalal, producer and director in Pakistani film industry, prefer location sound recording. In this the visual sound is recorded with the help of a third person, who holds mike. The mike cost is high that is between 4 to 5 lacks, and if the mike is being used, then there is no need to use ADR. Jack Foley, was the inventor of Foley sound, that is deemed as live action sound, which is generated at the studio, by means of routinely surfaces and objects (Wierzbicki, Platte, Smith, Beck, Ament, & Kerins, 2015; Reddell, 2018). The Foley effects are recorded by the Foley artists in the editing stage, with moving image, used for guidance. Apart from Foley, another sound effect is known as ambient sound (Owens, Wu, McDermott, Freeman, & Torralba, 2016), which is unique in context. Ambient sound is effective in recording blips in sound, in the form of a “patch”. Mikes that are available are of different types; uni-direction, bi-direction and omni-direction. The uni-direction mike is available in the form of hand and collar mike. Bi-direction mike has two sensors, and usually used in the FM studios and radio stations. The omni mike on the contrary, is a boom type multi-purpose mike usually known as folly. Music scores are prevalingly used by filmmakers as a tool to create an emotional response in the audience. Filmmaker’s are tremendously using these scores and let the audience react differently to different scenes. Music is often used as an opening gambit for a movie, while played at the backdrop. John William composed a brassy theme music, which gained massive

popularity and has been parodied by many. Music score has been integrated by the horror movie filmmakers and is responsible to generate suspense and tension, exactly before the monster had to attack. Concussively, music is used as a powerful tool in the representation of cultural or ethnic context. In the documentary films, there is a common practice of integrating voiceovers. One example is the *Original Blade Runner* film launched in 1982.

As the ADR is deemed highly expensive, therefore, due to unavailability of this equipment, only general sound is being recorded. The LSR records only mono-channel sounds, and then these sounds are them edited copy and pasted so that they can be used as stereo sound, which is 5.1 Dolby or 7.1 Dolby. Evidence has shown that technology is impacting the film industry with a rapid pace (Adrian, 2017). According to Adrian (2017), in the past decade, the cinema operator used to invest on a 35mm projector, which was having xenon bulbs or 7.1 and 5.1 sound. However, the challenges for the film directors are increasing. They are facing difficulty in understanding monetizing and operational management of sound options. This challenge is faced across the globe. Unfortunately, Pakistani film producers and directors are unable to manage the 5.1 Dolby or 7.1 Dolby yet. Only a couple of Pakistani music directors have managed to record their films internationally with the aforementioned Dolby formats. Additionally, there is a scarcity of financial budget in the Pakistani film budget. The filmmakers that have received higher education from international locations in the filmmaking are the only ones struggling to have films with high quality. After becoming successful in few of their films, they have now managed to develop their films in the 7.1 Dolby formats. However, in Pakistan, there is a significant crises in the development of sound studios, that could serve as a platform for new upcoming film sound producers and developers.

Conclusion

Review of literature in the Pakistani music and cinema industry reveals a severe scarcity of sound research. There are challenges faced by the music directors and film directors in recording of the sounds and converting them into cinema sound formats, however, the literature does not highlight this. The information is available through media and YouTube channels; and there is a need to highlight the challenges faced by the Pakistani filmmakers in recording of sound.

Suggestions

The paper has discussed the challenges related to the sound in the filmmaking faced by Pakistanis. This section presents suggestions for improvement of the sound in the Pakistani film industry. The interviews revealed that the Pakistani film industry is unable to manage the software issues. There is a shortage of equipment's for sound mixing. The music producers are affected largely. They have software issues. The folly sound is not taken seriously. There are technology and financial challenges. The sound studios are not completely equipped with latest sound mixing software. The music producers go abroad and then mix the sound, to be played in their movies. There are challenges associated at the Racket level. A high usage of plugin sound is evidenced in contrast to the 5.1 or 7.1 Dolby sound. The lacking of software enforces the music producers to use the crack versions, which are again a challenge.

In these scenarios, it is high time for the sound and music in the Pakistani film industry. There is a need to assign budget for the music and sound related issues. There is a need to invest in the latest technology and sound mixing software's so that a good quality sound can be produced in Pakistani films. The international training of the film sound producers may be a good option. However, this requires the transmittance of that knowledge amongst other film sound developers so that they could take maximum advantage from the international trainings and improve the sound mixing quality.

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