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## The Popular Campus Vocabulary and Language: A Focus on Contemporary Indian Campus Novels

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Campus novel is a popular sub-genre of fiction across the world which is growing by leaps and bounds both in quantity and quality. The new generation novelists, emerged from the 'college or university pass-out community', are producing campus novels to record their experiences and relive their student life forever. Though they are not professional writers of fiction their focus is very clear and realistic in many aspects. The first-timer novelists penned the campus life 'as it is' in their debut novels. While making it appealing to the community of young students, they are really successful in using the most frequently used phrases of student language and all the concepts that reflect student life to the core in their novels. The prominent aspects like vocabulary, language, expression, style, and the live examples of some situations are reviewed in this paper to throw light on the use and quality of the language.

Language is an inseparable and integral part of life. If the people who speak a particular language are important the language also becomes prominent. The context we discuss language is none other than the language of students who are the principal stakeholders on campus. Therefore, the language of students on campus is focused in the paper to the possible extent.

Like other sub-genres of Novel, Campus Novel is originated from the west. According to Chris Baldick "Campus novel is a novel, usually comic or satirical, in which the action is set within enclosed world of university (or similar set of learning) and highlights the follies of academic life". The number of novels dealing with academic themes is adequate that they can form a corpus called Campus Novel. It is observed that Campus novel has been widespread in Indian English literature since 1960s. The authors of early campus novels both in the east and west are predominantly professors of English, and obviously they produced good literary pieces with good content as well as form. They are the people who enriched this genre to the highest level.

The author of the first campus novel in Indian writing in English *The Long Long Days*, PM Nityanandan happens to be a mechanical engineer. The other novelist Dr. Kavery Nambisan, a surgeon by profession produced *The Truth (Almost) about Bharat*. The remaining all authors - Rama Sarma (*The Farewell Party*) Rita Joshi (*The Awakening- A Novella in Rhyme*) Prema Nandakumar (*Atom and the Serpent*) D. R. Sharma (*Miracles Happen*) Prof. Makarand Paranjape (*The Narrator*) K.L. Kamal (*Campus*) M.K. Naik (*Corridors of Knowledge*) are involved in and connected to academics at different capacities and produced good pieces of campus fiction.

The trend continued till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. But in India, at the dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> century, new generation of writers who have just stepped out of some professional colleges or of any arts

and science colleges emerged and started producing popular campus novels. They are all young, energetic and talented writers who could draw the attention and applause of the masses. They are bagging Bestseller Novel awards at national and international levels. The author group of 'Neo-campus novelists' is pouring forth their fresh experience in playing different roles as a student, hosteller, researcher, student leader, lover etc in more realistic way than a fictional description. The readers of these novels are really enjoying themselves because they look for their own images in different characters they come across in the novels.

### **Language and Expressions**

Though the expressions vary from country to country, region to region, the language that students speak is English in different dialects. The language used by and spoken by students is both of formal and informal at different contexts. The formal expressions they use when they happen to communicate with the faculty, dean, or any other persons related to administration. But in all other occasions the students use language of informal vocabulary and tone.

### **Academics**

Academics is the prime component of student life on campus where in they expose to class work, formal and informal interaction with faculty, books, libraries, examinations, viva voice and other evaluation processes. They also confront campus interviews and develop career oriented preparation at this phase. Therefore, we tend to find words and expressions like: majors, minors, practicals, assignments, quizzes, surprise quizzes, presentations, PPTs, Viva Voice, internship, group discussions, civil services, communication, skills, technology, stress, lectures, profs, GPA, CGPA in almost all campus fiction.

### **Use of Short names**

The use of short names is another important feature in campus life. It is prevalent in premier institutes of science and technology to corporate schools of the day. They have short names for everything. They call their teachers, professors, subjects, departments, activities, amenities, administrative positions, authors of the books, publishers, cinema theatres, recreation activities etc all in short names. One can find enough evidence for this in almost all campus novels.

It is very much evident in *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat. students use Ap Mech for Applied Mechanics (Bhagat,53) Insti for Institute (Bhagat,60) GPA for Grade Points average (Bhagat,70) Flu Mech for Fluid Mechanics(Bhagat,86) C2D for Cooperate to Dominate (Bhagat,102) Operation Pendulum for the creative burglary of question paper from college (Bhagat,162) disco for Discipline Committee(Bhagat,189) in the novel.

In *Sumthing of a Mocktale* by Soma Das, the acronym CSODR which is actually meant as center for study of obstacles in the Development of Regions gets defacto abbreviation like Center for Suppression, Oppression, Depression and Repression(Das,2), the intellectual hot spot Ganga Dhaba becomes GD (Das,43). The students make use of acronym DDLJ for the popular blockbuster movie- Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge in their casual talks.

Manish Gupta in his debut novel *Nine Months Ago* quotes from his IIT, Delhi experience puts the newly coined meaning for PPT as Pre Placement Talks (companies visit to IITs for

recruitment and selection for student internship) rather than Power Point presentation(Gupta,23). He also mentions the use of V-Day for Valentine's Day (Gupta, 149)

In Karan Bajaj's *Keep off the Grass* we come across OB for Organizational Behaviour and CR for class representative CC for central canteen in Bombay Rains Bombay Girls (Bose, 64) etc. Sachin Garg uses ASL which talks about age, sex and location (Garg,12). We also witness the formation of like-minded student groups with stylish and peculiar acronyms such YRV which would technically read: whY aRe weS. Further they rearrange it like VYRS and pronounce it as virus (Garg,75). Though these expressions look a bit odd in serious fiction, the authors keep on using them in the campus novels.

### **Use of Nicknames**

Use of nick names is a common phenomenon in student life. It is reflected in almost all novels. Obviously, in *Five Point Someone* we come across nicknames of Baku for the senior and one among the ragers group (Bhagat,5), fatso for Alok, the fat boy and one of the three protagonists of the novel; wing mates- Happy surd for Sukhwinder, studious Venkat, itchy Rajesh. Roly, Talcum, Engli, Greek god are some of the nicknames used in *Sumthing of a Mocktale*.

### **The Influence of Mother Tongue**

Campus, in fact, is a major platform where people of different strata, races, attitudes, ideology live and work together. There is a lot of chance to have cosmopolitan culture and developing mixed vocabulary. However, the influence of vernacular languages on the English is much noticed in many campus novels.

Students are using technology on campus for academic pursuits as well as personal things. They use laptops, mobile phones and other electronic gadgets for learning and communicating with others. They are sending and receiving mails official communication and sometimes they chat with their friends especially girlfriends in English wherein we find the use of some expressions of mother tongue.

In *Nine months ago*, the protagonist Shashank has online chat with Arpita in three spells. They are recorded as it is in the novel. We can observe expressions like: hehe, yeah, oh, ya, hmmm, cya soon, haan, accha, kya yar, chal then, ab overacting mat karo etc. besides the use of lot many punctuation marks and short phrases in English. One can also notice the use of Hindi words in the chatting but written in English script. Use of Hindi expressions like kahan boss (Bajaj, 75), koi jugad hai (Bajaj,79), yeh bharose ka dhanda hai (Bajaj,81) are also found used in different contexts in *Keep Off The Grass*.

### **Use of filthy language**

Students, many a time, use abusive language too. In every sentence they tag some words of kind that is unmentionable, forbidden types. The use of words like fuck, bastard, mother fucker, bencho and assholes can be found common in many novels. That looks very odd to any reader but with students it is quite common in campus life.

The opening chapter of *Bombay Rains Bombay Girls* by Anirban Bose, we find the most common scene in a professional college i.e., ragging. Pheru, the senior who leads the team uses a very filthy language with the freshers. He says cock-roach for Va-roach the sir-name of Rajeev (Bose, 27) and talks for a while on cock play and virginity. He also mis-pronounces the name of Adityaman Bhat deliberately as I-did- a man's-butt (Bose, 33).

While describing Ganga Dhaba, the intellectual hotspot at JNU, the author Soma Das presents a conversation between two political activists planning a destructive act. We notice the repeated use of word 'saala' in their discussion. (Das, 48)

The reasons for the use of such filthy language one can estimate as continuous exposure to mass culture and the language; reading the porno stuff and watching pornographic videos; and attitude of taking everything easy. Students, at that age, feel that they know all and they don't want anybody to teach them or preach them anything. Independence they expect in all ways. They also get habituated to smoking, drinking, racing, partying, and addiction to drugs and dating etc. Most of the student characters in the novel *Keep off the Grass* exhibit this idea and thus we find words like dope, marijuana, smoking, rum etc. In *Five Point Someone*, we come across some more words like vodka, sip, coke, cigarette, fag, screw etc.

They also strive to unravel the unknown things about the opposite sex. The infatuation of the students in the teens will lead to sexual pursuits with opposite sex, mostly culminating in break-ups but quite a few ends in marriage. The books they read, the literature they study have their impact on the vocabulary they use. Present trend of using internet and social networking is also shaping the vocabulary of students on the campus.

## **Others**

Some students involve in political activities directly on the campus or off the campus. Castism, racism, color, regionalism and all other divisive factors affect the attitude, behavior, language and more specifically the vocabulary. As a result, they use some revolutionary vocabulary derived from different ideologies they incline to or associate with. Rarely, some people switch over to spiritual experiments of distinct variety and thus effect of religion, culture can be noticed on the part of students. The impact is less visible on language but more on life style.

Quite often, youth are interested in games and sports which are played at international arena. They join in sports clubs, they take part in tournaments, and they organize sports competitions at different levels. Many students watch the matches of various sports on TVs and they also pickup vocabulary from them and use them in their routine life. The discussion related to squash; morning walks in *Five Point Someone*, cricket matches in *A Sunny Shady Life* can be noticed as examples of this kind.

## **Conclusion**

The above study reflects some real-life situations where the students used language contextually; the exact vocabulary presented in student life; and the expression and style of students. The presentation of the novelists in all occasions is very much realistic rather than fictional.

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