MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH (MEG-04)
ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE
ASSIGNMENT

Attempt all the questions

1. Discuss 'Indianisation' of English, citing examples of some major features of Indian English.   (20)

2. Give a complete description of the consonants of English.   (20)

3. What, in your view, are the most important learner variables in the learning of a second language? Explain.   (20)

4. What do you understand by 'foregrounding'? Discuss with suitable examples.   (20)

5. Write short notes on the following: (20)

   a) The function of intonation.
   b) Conversion as a morphological device.

MEG-04: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

Q1. Discuss 'Indianisation' of English, citing examples of some major features of Indian English.

Ans. Intro:-English has never been the native language of India. Regardless it's cumulative usage across the country almost supersedes eighty million people and that too in a country with nineteen other national languages along with numerous dialects are spoken across the country. The root of English in India can be traced back to 1600AD dated 31st December when few English merchants were granted charter by Queen Elizabeth I for a monopolistic trade with India and East; since the purpose at first was solely trade so mere influx of some English & Indian words across both languages for trading communication. But gradually with annexation of Indian princely states it became language of education in India in 1835 and was made the official language of then govt. in 1837 thus marking the ratification of English in India.

Indianization of English is the process through which the form of English is changed, altered or rather modified with the view to make it more conveniently acceptable and useable for Indian speakers or users. This process involves not just change in any of the communicative form of English rather both the communicative forms viz. oral and written. The oral change involves primarily the change in the way of pronunciation i.e. accent of the said language which in India, since it is a country of diversified language, related to the accent of the regional or state vise (native) language used by the Indian English speakers. Along with, the change also involves use of pidgins at times to enable a convenient means of communication. The varied changes in the language i.e. English since involves prominently the oral changes thus makes it a more complex task than it may seem and hence involves use

of some instruments or devices of change to make it more apt and valid, which are as under:

Language of the country: The major device or tools in Indianization of English are the major language of India viz. Hindi &Urdu which adds up many words of in English language; so are the words of some other languages giving their minor contribution to the language. For instance words like Satyagrah, Dhoti, Pundit, Bandh, Dharna etc are now the part of English language.

Translation: Translation is the establishment of similar equality or equivalent words of one language into the other one so as to form a language or linguistic correlation amongst them. For instance the words like, god-love, salt-spoiler have been translated into their equivalents as iswar prem and namak-haram respectively.

Shift/ Borrowing: The Indianisation of English via shift encompasses following aspects, the shifting words may deviate grammatically from American and British words formation, they may involve loan shifts from Indian language and they as well may have some phrases used in English which actually are solely part of Indian Cultural Context.

Impact of the socio cultural norms: The Indianization of English differs largely form the native English and differ in the choices of words, imagery, nuances of meaning and the communication strategy of the words weather oral or verbal and very clearly posses English flavour.

Psychology/ Reduction of Incongruence or Misfit: The use of Indian English on day-to-day basis consequently led to a simplified understanding of the context hence making language easier, simpler and easily adaptable and highly effective to catch attention.

Q2. Give a complete description of the consonants of English.

Ans. It may be said that English consonants are **phonemes** that create meaning. Consider, for example, the change in meaning when the phoneme /m/ is switched with the phoneme /c/: {man} becomes {can} and meaning is changed.

It may also be said that English consonants are distinct from English vowels because of several features. The main feature is that usually, though not always, consonants have interrupted airflow instead of prolonged airflow and thus have lesser vibrational quality. To illustrate, it is easy to sing prolonged notes on a vowel like /a/ or /u/, but impossible to sing a prolonged note on /p/ or /t/; some exceptions to interrupted airflow are /m/ and /l/.

There are three main categories of consonants. The categories describe the three dominate traits of consonant articulation. The first is manner, which describes whether and in what manner airflow is affected by articulation, e.g., fricative or nasal. The second is place, which describes where articulation occurs and which articulators are involved, e.g., teeth and lips for labio-dental. The third is **voice**, which describes whether vocal chord vibrations are continued or curtailed, e.g., /b/ in "bunny".versus /p/ in "puppy."

Each of the three main descriptive categories have subcategories that further describe specific kinds of articulation. For manner, some subcategories are:

Fricative: formed by airflow forced through constrictions in the articulatory anatomy, or vocal tract: e.g., /f/ /h/ /v/.

Nasal: formed with oral cavity closure and airflow forced past an open velum into the nasal cavity: /m/ /n/ and -ng sounds.

Stop: formed by complete blockage of airflow, consequent heightening of air pressure, and release of air pressure (i.e., plosion), e.g., /k/ /t/ /b/ /g/.

Glide: formed by the gliding motion of articulators against each other (less distinct in American English): /w/ /j/

Place of articulation and placement of articulators is more difficult to explain since it requires knowledge of the anatomy of articulation. Some articulatory parts it is necessary to know are the tongue blade, epiglottis, velum, labial,and alveolar ridge. To understand place, it is critical that you commit this anatomy to memory. A good cross-section diagram of the mouth and throat is essential (click the "anatomy" hyperlink to a good diagram).

Voice is somewhat simpler to explain. Sets of consonants come in contrasting pairs of which one part activates vocal chord vibration while the other does not. A standard example of this is the pair /t/ and /d/. Articulate a /t/ and you have no vocal chord vibration; no matter how hard you try, all you get is a plosive aspiration. Articulate a /d/ and you can produce vocal chord vibration that can be sustained for a short time. Some other pairs of voiced-unvoiced consonants are /b/ /p/ and /g/ /k/.

Q3. What, in your view, are the most important learner variables in the learning of a second language? Explain.

Ans. Here are some of them :

1. **Motivating factor:** The drive to learn a language can be a lot of things. Like trying to impress a guy/girl, to get better grades in school, to improve your business relations, it's something you want to cross off in your bucket list or your love for that particular country where the language is spoken. Whatever maybe the reasons, that drive/interest needs to come from within you.

2. **Attitude:** A healthy and open mind is needed to accept things which we don't understand and an 'I Can Do It' attitude is vital.

3. **Practice:** Try to practice whatever you learn. If you have a buddy who learns it with you, you guys can slowly converse in the language, discuss, learn and practice more. Another good way to practice is by reading some basic books meant for toddlers. Have a dual language dictionary for the words which you cannot understand or just 'Google' them and write it down.

4. **Perseverance:** There will be days where you will be tired and disinterested. That's okay. But you must be able to shrug it off the next day and carry on with the learning process.

Q4. What do you understand by 'foregrounding'? Discuss with suitable examples.

Ans. Foregrounding is a literary concept borrowed from Russian Formalism and developed by formalist Jan Mukařovský who called it aktualisace, which has been translated to English as *foregrounding*. Foregrounding is a technique within literary devices whereby the author creates "defamiliarization" through linguistic (i.e., pertaining to language) "dislocation" that calls readers' attention the strangeness of the world or the perception of the world portrayed or depicted in the literary work.

In explanation, Mukařovský posited that literature is a process of "**strange making**" whereby the world or a perspective is presented in a manner that separates it from real life experience through literary devices that manipulate variables to set literary experience apart from real experience, thus making it strange, as in unfamiliar. This stands in stark contrast to classical theory stating literature reflects real life experience of the world and how it operates.

The **purpose** of foregrounding is to sharpen readers' vision and understanding of the event, feelings, circumstance, concept, etc. that the author wants to point out in the hope of giving readers new clarity, epiphany or motivation etc. The favored **techniques** for creating foregrounding are patterns, such as repetitions; ambiguity, in which meaning is clear but conclusions may be variable; metaphor; tone; parallelism; and diction. Structural elements may also be foregrounded, such as character development and plot structure. Any of these devices may be used to defamiliarize the literary work through linguistic dislocation (i.e., atypical language usage) so that the reader is struck by the author's points and aims while submerged in a "strange" perspective of life and the world.

Q5. Write short notes on the following:

(a) The function of intonation.

Ans. In linguistics, intonation refers to the way in which a speaker varies his or her pitch when pronouncing words. Along with stress (the way certain words are emphasized), intonation is an element of linguistic prosody. "Pitch" refers to the height of one's voice when saying a word. Normal speech is delivered at midlevel, and intonation involves altering one's pitch. "Sentence stress" is also part of

intonation, and it involves pronouncing some words at a higher pitch and more clearly to emphasize them.

Intonation has several functions. It allows the speaker to convey emotions and attitudes in speech, such as finality, joy, sadness, etc. Intonation also allows the speaker to stress certain words. In addition, intonation can help the speaker convey the grammar of the spoken words by pausing at certain points, for example, or by raising the voice to ask a question. In addition, intonation can help the speaker convey what he or she expects of the listener(s) in discourse by, for example, seeming to ask a question or by conveying when something is new information in contrast to information the listener already knows.

(b) Conversion as a morphological device.

Ans. Conversion is basically a process where a new word is formed from a previously existing one without any change in the initial word's form. Nothing is added, nothing is taken away. Conversion as a morphological device occurs (mostly) naturally and constantly since it's one of the easiest ways for a language to develop—it lends itself particularly well to slang.

One example is noun-to-verb; although, it doesn't necessarily have to follow this path. To understand why conversion is such a creative and ordinary tool in word creation is to look at objects people talk about a lot. For example, the noun "google" refers to the webpage a lot of people in the world use. It's also worth noting that while the Internet is becoming an essential part of our lives, a vast share of its users are not familiar with all the tools available to them. Typing something into the address bar works the same as a Google search, but people still tend to go on the webpage itself to search for something. So it was only a matter of time that the noun "google" turned into the verb "google," meaning "to look for something through Google." Only it kept evolving from there. Now the verb "google" is also in use meaning almost any type of search activity on the web. People "google" things on Facebook. Conversion has pushed the meaning away from the source, but we can still see the path it took.