History of English Language (ENG-201)

Md. Tahmid Husain

ID# 180809091

Section A- Ans to the Question no 2:

Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" is a seminal work that provides a vivid depiction of the social and cultural aspects of medieval England

There are twenty-four stories in The Canterbury Tales, each told by a different member of the pilgrimage group. The stories range in subject matter from tragedy to comedy; some are more obviously related to characters' lives, while others are more fanciful.

The Canterbury Tales is important for several reasons. It is a great resource for learning about Middle English; it paved the way for later writers like William Shakespeare; and it provides a lot of insight into life in medieval England.Geoffrey Chaucer wrote Canterbury Tales with the purpose of showcasing the diversity and complexity of human nature through a variety of characters and their stories. His aim was to provide a realistic portrayal of society during the medieval period, highlighting both the virtues and vices of individuals from different social classes. Chaucer used the framework of a pilgrimage to Canterbury as a setting for his tales, allowing for a range of characters to interact and share their narratives. Through these tales, Chaucer also aimed to critique the societal norms and conventions of his time, addressing issues such as corruption, hypocrisy, and the abuse of power. The Canterbury Tales serves as a reflection of the cultural and social landscape of the 14th century, offering insight into the moral, religious, and political concerns of the era. Chaucer's writing style, characterized by wit, humor, and satire, allowed him to explore complex themes and ideas in a compelling and engaging manner. Overall, Canterbury Tales stands as a timeless work of literature that continues to captivate readers with its rich depiction of human behavior and societal dynamics.

Section B- Answers to the question no 3:

The Renaissance was a remarkable period of European history, characterized by a renewed interest in learning, the arts, and science. It marked a significant shift from the medieval period and had a profound impact on various aspects of society, including the English language. The Renaissance played a vital role in shaping modern English through its influence on vocabulary, literature, and the standardization of the language. One of the major impacts of the Renaissance on the English language was the enrichment of its vocabulary. During this period, scholars and writers were inspired by the revival of classical literature and began adopting words and phrases from Latin and Greek. This infusion of new words and concepts allowed for more precise expressions and the development of specialized vocabulary in various fields such as anatomy, astronomy, and mathematics. For instance, words like "antibiotic," "telescope," and "algorithm" trace their origins back to this period. The Renaissance thus contributed to the expansion and enrichment of the English lexicon, making it more versatile and adaptable to the emerging scientific and cultural advancements. Moreover, the Renaissance had a significant impact on English literature, further shaping the language. This period witnessed the flourishing of renowned writers and poets, such as William Shakespeare and John Milton, whose works have become pillars of English literature. These writers embraced the classical traditions and techniques, incorporating them into their works, and establishing a distinct English literary tradition. The works of Shakespeare are noted for their profound linguistic creativity, conveying complex ideas through poetic language, imagery, and dramatic wordplay. His plays introduced countless new words and phrases to the English language, such as "assassination," "lackluster," and "inaudible." The Renaissance, by elevating English literature to such great heights, contributed to the development of English as a rich and expressive language. Additionally, the Renaissance facilitated the standardization of the English language. As education and literacy rates increased during this period, there was a need for a consistent, widely understood form of English. Inspired by the classical languages and the desire to create a national identity, scholars worked towards establishing a set of rules and guidelines for English grammar and spelling. Their efforts led to the publication of the first English grammar books, such as William Bullokar's "Pamphlet for Grammar" and Richard Mulcaster's "Elementarie," which aimed to standardize the language and make it more accessible. This standardization was crucial in making English a universal language, enabling effective communication, and facilitating the spread of knowledge and ideas. In conclusion, the Renaissance had a tremendous impact on modern English. Through its influence on vocabulary, literature, and the standardization of the language, it enriched and transformed English into what it is today. The infusion of new words and concepts expanded the lexicon, allowing for precision and specialization. The works of renowned writers like Shakespeare contributed to the development of English literature, making it a language of beauty and creativity. Finally, the Renaissance's emphasis on standardization gave rise to a unified English language, facilitating communication and the exchange of ideas. The Renaissance's impact on modern English is undeniable, and its legacy continues to shape the language and its global significance.

The Bible has had a profound impact on the English language, enriching it with depth, complexity, and vocabulary. The influence of biblical Hebrew on Western languages, especially English, has been extensive and unacknowledged. The Bible has contributed to the molding of the English language, with words, expressions, and phrases rooted in the Bible encompassing historical, ideological, and philosophical concepts. The Holy Bible is a key source of English words and allusions, providing a deeper understanding of Western languages and culture. Christianity, as an influential religion in the Western world, has greatly influenced English language formation, specification, and development. The translations of the Bible into English have played a significant role in religious practice, the arts, society, and the English language itself. The availability of large parts of the Bible in English for over 1100 years has contributed to the continuity and legitimacy of vernacular translation, shaping the English language over time.

Section A- Ans to the question no 1:

The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what today is Denmark and northern Germany. At that time the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders - mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" [sic] and their language was called "Englisc" - from which the words "England" and "English" are derived.Germanic invaders entered Britain on the east and south coasts in the 5th century.

Old English (450-1100 AD)

Part of Beowulf, a poem written in Old English.The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what we now call Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty understanding Old English. Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

Middle English (1100-1500)

An example of Middle English by Chaucer.In 1066 William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy (part of modern France), invaded and conquered England. The new conquerors (called the Normans) brought with them a kind of French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes. For a period there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes spoke French. In the 14th century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English. It was the language of the great poet Chaucer (c1340-1400), but it would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand today.

The English Reformation, a series of events in 16th-century England by which the Church of England broke away from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church, had profound long-term effects on English society. These effects were not just religious but also political, cultural, and social, shaping the nation's identity and its global outlook.

The most immediate and visible effect of the Reformation was the establishment of the Church of England, with the monarch as its head. This marked a significant shift in religious authority, from the Pope to the English Crown. The Church of England became the primary religious institution in the country, and its doctrines and practices, which were a mix of Catholic and Protestant elements, became the norm. This led to a unique form of Protestantism known as Anglicanism. For a deeper understanding of the political causes leading to such reforms.

The Reformation also led to a period of intense religious conflict and persecution. Catholics and Protestants alternately gained and lost favour, depending on the religious inclinations of the reigning monarch. This religious conflict often spilled over into politics, with Catholics and Protestants forming rival factions at court. The persecution of Catholics during the reign of Elizabeth I, for example, led to several plots against her life and reignited conflict with Catholic Spain. The way constitutions were crafted during this period played a significant role in shaping these events, as explored in our section on the crafting of constitutions.

Culturally, the Reformation had a profound impact. The dissolution of the monasteries led to the redistribution of vast amounts of land and wealth, altering the social and economic landscape of the country. The emphasis on reading the Bible in the vernacular led to a rise in literacy and the spread of new ideas. The Reformation also influenced the development of English literature and art, with writers and artists exploring themes of faith, doubt, and religious conflict. Additionally, the role of women in medieval society saw shifts during this time, which you can explore in more detail in our notes on women in medieval society.

In the long term, the English Reformation helped to shape a distinct English national identity. The break with Rome and the establishment of a national church fostered a sense of English exceptionalism and independence. This was reinforced by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, which was seen as a divine endorsement of the Protestant cause. The Reformation also laid the groundwork for England's later expansion and colonisation, with the Church of England playing a key role in the spread of English culture and influence around the world. The process of industrialisation and its impact on democracy further evolved from these foundational changes, which is discussed in our analysis of industrialisation and democracy.

Section B- Ans to the question no 1:

The English language has undergone many changes throughout the 21st century, but it is difficult to say whether it has angered or improved as a whole. Some people may argue that the use of informal language and text speak has angered the purists, while others may argue that the increased diversity and inclusivity in the language has improved it. Additionally, the use of technology has also had a significant impact on the way the language is used. Overall, the English language is constantly evolving and it is ultimately up to each individual to decide whether these changes are viewed as positive or negative.

As a linguist in the 21st century, I would employ innovative methods to document and analyze the impact of the internet on American English.

1.Vocabulary:

Utilize web crawlers to collect vast amounts of text data from online sources.

 Analyze word frequency and co-occurrence patterns to identify emerging and evolving vocabulary.

2.Syntax:

Employ natural language processing (NLP) tools to examine sentence structure and grammatical patterns.

 Study the influence of digital communication platforms on sentence length, complexity, and informality.

3.Communication Style:

 Conduct discourse analysis on online forums, social media, and messaging apps.

Section B- Ans to the Question no 2:

The Industrial Revolution, the rise of the middle class, and the spread of public education in the 19th century significantly influenced literature and the arts. These advancements led to increased literacy rates, a growing demand for entertainment, and a shift in societal values. As a result, themes of urbanization, social inequality, and the search for identity became prevalent in literature and the arts .

The Industrial Revolution began in Britain from around the 1750s to around 1830. This then began to spread to other countries. During industrialisation, manual labour was replaced by mass production and there is great economic growth. As well as an increased division of labour, technology was used more to provide solutions to problems (rather than relying on people to solve the problems). Before people carried out tasks like processing and fabrication by hand at home, yet later this was achieved in factories through industrial manufacturing processes.

Technology was essential in the Industrial Revolution as it sped up the production line and completely revolutionised how things were produced. Suddenly, machines could create objects exceptionally quickly, whereas before, everything had to be made by hand. The cloth production became faster and meant that human labour was needed less. The development of the metal and textiles industries allowed commercial and personal goods to be mass-produced.

Key inventions of the period include:

steam engine

flying shuttle

water frame

spinning jetty

power loom.

The Industrial Revolution profoundly changed society through urbanisation and industrialisation as well as increased technology and communication.

The author Charles Dickens satirised the consequences of the Industrial Revolution by criticising the treatment of the poor, workhouses and the ruthlessness of the factory owners.

The Industrial Revolution shaped Elizabeth Gaskell's biography and literature, such as the novels North and South (1854) and Mary Barton (1848).

Romanticism responded to the Industrial Revolution by emphasising nature, rural life, imagination and the common human.

The Industrial Revolution had a far-reaching impact on literature, influencing Modernism and the philosophy of Marxism.

The factor that contributed to the growth of the middle class in the late 1800s was the industrial revolution. The Industrial Revolution was a period in history during which there was a shift in the way things were made. It began in Britain in the 18th century and lasted through the 19th century. During this time, hand production methods were replaced by machines, and new chemical and iron production processes were introduced.This new mode of production led to a significant increase in the output of goods, making them more accessible and affordable. This resulted in the growth of industries, which in turn created job opportunities and increased wages. This increase in wages, along with the mass production of goods, led to the growth of the middle class in the late 1800s. The middle class was able to purchase goods that were once only available to the wealthy, and their consumption patterns further drove the expansion of industry.

The growth of the middle class in the late 1800s was influenced by technological advancements, improved education, and increased accessibility to college.

The growth of the middle class in the late 1800s was influenced by several factors. One factor was the technological advancements of the time, such as electricity and the telephone, which allowed for the growth of factories in cities. This led to an influx of job-seekers and an expansion of urban housing and services. Another factor was the improvement in public education, particularly the proliferation of high schools, which provided better education and training opportunities for the children of the middle class. Lastly, the creation of land-grant colleges made college education more accessible to the middle class.

The 19th century was a golden age of English literature, with the works of Romantic poets like William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats, as well as Victorian novelists like Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and the Brontë sisters. These writers contributed to the richness and diversity of the English language through their innovative use of language and exploration of themes. Expansion of Education: The 19th century witnessed the expansion of education, particularly for the middle class. As literacy rates rose, more people gained proficiency in reading and writing English. This led to a democratization of language and increased access to literature and knowledge.

In the 19th century played a pivotal role in fostering a culture of literacy and intellectual curiosity. As literacy rates rose, particularly among the middle class, more people gained proficiency in reading and writing English, leading to a democratization of language and increased access to literature and knowledge. Libraries, schools, and reading societies proliferated, providing readers with a wealth of literary resources and opportunities for intellectual enrichment. This widespread dissemination of literacy helped to fuel the literary flourishing of the period, as readers hungered for new works of literature and engaged with the ideas and themes they encountered in books.

The spread of public education had a profound impact on literature. As literacy rates increased, so too did the demand for reading materials. This led to the growth of the publishing industry and the emergence of new genres of literature, such as the novel and the short story. Public education also helped to create a more informed and critical readership, which in turn influenced the way that authors wrote.