ASSIGNMENT BEGG-172
Language and Linguistics
July 2026 & January 2027 Sessions
(Based on Blocks 1-4)

Max.Marks:100

Attempt all the sections

SECTION A

5 × 4 = 20 Marks

1. **Write short notes on the following**:

    1. Allophone
    2. Minimal Pair
    3. Register
    4. Inflection
    5. Dialect

SECTION B

5 × 10 = 50 Marks

1. Explain how English consonants are classified with suitable examples.
2. Describe the structure of the English syllable with examples.
3. Distinguish between inflectional and derivational morphology.
4. Explain the structure of the Noun Phrase in English.
5. Discuss language variation with reference to dialect and register.

SECTION C

2 × 15 = 30 Marks

1. Discuss the sound system of English with reference to vowels, consonants and syllables.
2. Explain how simple sentences can be transformed into compound and complex sentences. Give suitable examples.

1. Write short notes on the following:

1. Allophone

Answer

An allophone is a particular spoken realisation of a phoneme. A phoneme is an abstract contrastive sound unit: replacing one phoneme with another can change the meaning of a word, as in /pɪn/ and /bɪn/. Allophones, in contrast, are variants that usually do not distinguish words in the same language. Their distribution often depends on neighbouring sounds or on a sound's position within the syllable.

Consider the English phoneme /p/. At the beginning of a stressed syllable, as in pin, it is normally aspirated [p^h]: a noticeable puff of air follows its release. After /s/, as in spin, it is generally unaspirated [p]. English speakers normally interpret both sounds as instances of /p/, not as different words. The /l/ in many varieties of English supplies another example: a clearer [l] may occur before a vowel in leaf, whereas a darker [ɫ] is common after a vowel in feel. The exact distribution differs across accents.

Two allophones are in complementary distribution when each occurs in environments in which the other does not normally occur. Some variants are instead in free or stylistic variation, so their occurrence is not determined rigidly by the phonetic environment. Allophonic patterns are language-specific: an aspiration contrast which is non-phonemic in English can distinguish words in languages such as Hindi. Thus, the distinction between a phoneme and its allophones explains how speakers recognise stable sound categories despite systematic differences in actual pronunciation.

2. Minimal Pair

Answer

A minimal pair consists of two words in the same language that differ in meaning and in only one sound at the same position. The difference provides important evidence that the two sounds represent separate phonemes. For example, pin and bin contrast /p/ and /b/ at the beginning, while fan and van contrast /f/ and /v/. The words must be comparable in the relevant environment; mere differences in spelling are not sufficient.

Minimal pairs may test consonants or vowels. In English, ship and sheep distinguish /ɪ/ from /iː/, and bet and bat distinguish /e/ from /æ/ in accents that make those vowel distinctions. Similarly, sip and zip show that /s/ and /z/ can