

Date: 17.01.22

"The Rivals"

Question: - What is malapropism?

Answer: - The term malapropism derives its name from a very interesting and entertaining character Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan's Comedy 'The Rivals'. Mrs. Malaprop is a very strict and autocratic middle aged widowed aunt and guardian of the young leading lady Miss Lydia Languish. According to a will of Lydia's father, she cannot marry against the wishes and consent of Mrs. Malaprop. In case she does so, she stands to lose two-thirds of her handsome wealth. Mrs. Malaprop is a typical formidable, middle-aged aunt, a husband hunting, jealous woman who still thinks herself beautiful and so carries on a secret love affair through letters under an assumed name, with Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. Malaprop's use of big bombastic words is of special

Date :- 17.01.22

Page (2)

~~express~~ interest. She uses the words in such a way that the listener is left confused and confounded and when he realises her muddle-headedness, he cannot help laughter. Mrs. Malprop makes herself ridiculous by doing so. This trait is called malpropism. Through Mrs. Malprop, Sheridan produces artificial humour and she is used as a dramatic contrast to other characters.

The end.

Munu Bhushan Sinha
Deptt. of English
S.S. College, Jhansi