CHAPTER VII

SYNTACTIC PATTERNS
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7.1. Introduction

The word syntax is derived from a Greek word meaning 'ordering together', 'systematic arrangement', or 'putting together'. It is the study of sentence-building, of the ways in which words are arranged together in order to make larger units. A syntactic analysis is generally concerned with sentences and the constituents of sentences.

Briefly speaking, syntax is the grammar of sentences; it is the science of sentence construction. 'It is perhaps better to define syntax negatively, as the study of the combinations of such morphemes as are not bound on the levels of either inflection or derivation' (Robert A. Hall, 1969:191). By this definition, most of the elements involved in syntactical combinations will indeed be free, but some will be phrasally or clausally bound.

There are two quite distinct areas of syntax, one related to morphology and the other wholly or largely unrelated to it. In the past, morphology dealt with the ways in which words are built up and syntax with the ways in which they combine with each other to form sentences.
According to Charles Hockett, (1958) morphology includes stock of segmental morphemes, and the ways in which words are built out of them. Syntax includes the ways in which words, and supra segmental morphemes are arranged relative to each other in utterances.

It was Saussure who pointed out that 'morphology' has no distinctly autonomous object. It cannot, he said, be distinguished from syntax. Saussure, demonstrated that lexicology cannot be isolated from either syntax or morphology. "Morphology", "syntax" and "lexicology" interpenetrate because every synchronic fact is identical. No line of demarcation can be drawn in advance.

However, the chief concern of syntax is the sentence, which is the maximal unit of grammatical analysis, and the minimal syntactic level is the morpheme. Sentence may be analysed "segmentally" into phonological units called "phonemes" and "syllables"; into morphological units called "morphemes" and "words"; and into syntactic units called "phrases" and "clauses". At the same time, sentences may be described "suprasegmentally" in respect of the prosodies of "length", "stress", "pitch" and "intersegmentally" in respect of the prosodies of "syllable transitions or juncture".

7.2. Sentence Types

Structuring a sentence is something that comes naturally to most good and experienced writers - and to many weak and inexperienced writers too, unfortunately. A great many factors should
go into choosing and ordering the information: for example, the
relative importance, attached to each of the element; the tone and
emphasis to be conveyed; or the links to be established with the
sentence that comes before.

Sentences come in various forms according to the way we
analyse them. If classified according to its purpose, a sentence might
be: a statement, a question, an exclamation, and an imperative
(command). If classified according to the kinds of clause it contains, a
sentence might be:

7.2.1. **Simple** – having only one clause.

**Example:** They need our help.

7.2.2. **Compound** – having two or more main clauses

**Example:** They need our help, and we can give it, but
they won’t accept anything from us.

7.2.3. **Complex** – having one main clause and one subordinate
clause.

**Example:** They need our help, though they don’t admit it.

7.2.4 **Compound-Complex** – have two or more main clauses
and one or more subordinate clauses.

**Example:** They need our help and will get it when we
arrive, though they’ll resent it.
If classified according to the arrangement of its clauses, a sentence may take different names again. A compound sentence, for instance, may also be a 'balance' sentence – its clauses are carefully arranged to support one another in structure and meaning: I came, I saw, I conquered. Or it may be an “antithetical” sentence- the clauses balance each other in structure but contrast in meaning: Man proposes God disposes.

A complex sentence subdivides in turn. It will usually have one of two basic structures – loose or periodic. In a loose sentence the main clause comes first, with the subordinate clause/s following it. In a periodic sentence, the main clause or point comes last, with the subordinate clause/s preceding it. A mixture of these two basic structures produces a mixed sentence, in which the main clause lies in the middle.

7.3. Analysis

This chapter analyses the problems encountered while framing the simple and complex sentences in English by the students at collegiate level, while writing the English compositions [letter writing, hints development (Autobiography), dialogue writing, job application, invitation and comprehension].

The informants have constructed incorrect sentences that are simple sentences, complex sentences and the transformation of sentences – simple to complex; imperative to interrogative etc., they have also constructed long sentences without any punctuation mark.
These sentences look ambiguous due to their unbalanced length. Some grammatical features like of preposition, articles, etc., are placed inappropriately in the sentences, by the informants which sound absurd.

The basic application of applying the punctuation like question mark (?) in the interrogative sentence and the exclamatory mark (!) in the exclamatory sentence of that grade are not perfectly used by the informants. Thus, the data are analysed focusing on the above categories given above.

7.3.1. Simple Sentence

A simple sentence is one, which has only one subject and one predicate (or) it may be defined as the one, which has only one finite verb. The informants have constructed the simple sentence incorrectly by placing the words inappropriately. The errors in the sentences are due to the word order, tenses, verb, agreement, articles etc. The data elicited regarding the erroneous construction are as follows,

1. Received: I am study is well.

   Expected: I am studying well.

   The above sentence is incorrect because of the wrong use of the “be” form of the verb –‘is’ unwantedly and he has also not marked the suffix –‘ing’ to the verb “study” in a present continuous sentence following the “be” form “-am”, which denotes the first person singular used in the present tense sentence.
2. **Received:** How will your marriage life.

**Expected:** How is your marriage life?

The wrong use of the future tense marker "-will" in a present tense sentence by the informant should be substituted by the correct "be" form "is", which usually denotes the present tense.

3. **Received:** I was join as the library member.

**Expected:** I have joined as a library member.

The informant has constructed a faulty sentence by using the "be" form of verb "was" which is used in the first and third person denoting the past tense, in a present tense sentence. The above sentence should have been constructed correctly by substituting the present perfect "have" for "was" and by adding the past tense marked "-ed" to the word "join" which derives join +ed → joined. The wrong use of the definite article "the" should be replaced by the indefinite article "a" to form the correct sentence.

4. **Received:** I am lived in India.

**Expected:** I am living in India.

The incorrect suffix, "-ed" in the word "join" denoting the past tense has to be substituted by adding the suffix "-ing" in the word live + ing → living, to form a continuous construction, because it has been preceded by the present tense "be" form of verb "-am".
5. Received: My hobbies is playing cricket, watching TV, 
      Reading books etc.

      Expected: My hobbies are playing cricket, watching TV, 
      Reading books etc.

      The informant has substituted the singular agreement of the verb “is” wrongly, which has to be substituted by the plural “be” form of the verb, because the subject “hobbies” is in plural.

6. Received: How are your wife?

      Expected: How is your wife?

      The above interrogative sentence is incorrect because the verb used by the informant does not agree with its subject in person. The words “your” and “wife” in the interrogative sentence referred to the same sentence should take only a singular verb “is”, to form a correct sentence.

7. Received: Do you not interested in reading books?

      Expected: Are you not interested in reading books?

      The use of the auxiliary “do” in a present continuous sentence is found to be erroneous from the above response, which has to be substituted with the auxiliary verb “are”, when used in the place of the “subject” in an interrogative present continuous sentence.
8. **Received:** I am pass the time reading books.

**Expected:** I am passing the time reading books.

The informant to the above word “pass” has not placed the suffix “-ing”, which denotes the progressive form of tense in a present tense sentence. It has to be pass + ing → passing.

9. **Received:** I am go to college by bus.

**Expected:** I go to college by bus.

The use of the auxiliary verb “-am” which is always used in a continuous sentence is erroneous because the informant has unnecessarily added the verb “-am” in a simple present tense sentence.

10. **Received:** Do you going to Chennai?

**Expected:** Are you going to Chennai?

The above interrogative sentence is incorrect because the informant has used the auxiliary “do” in a present continuous tense sentence, which has to be substituted with the correct auxiliary verb “are”.

11. **Received:** I was joining this college recently.

**Expected:** I joined this college recently.

The above sentence is incorrect because the informant has used both the past tense singular verb “was” and the continuous verb
suffix "-ing" in a simple present sentence, which has to be replaced by adding the past tense marker "-ed" with the word join + ed → joined.

12. **Received:** What is your Hobbies?

    **Expected:** What are your Hobbies?

This error is due to the lack of agreement between the noun and auxiliary verb in the sentence. Since the number in the above sentence is plural, the verb used should also be in plural. So the singular "be" form of the verb "is" should be substituted with the plural "be" form of the verb "are", which agrees with the number and subject of the given sentence.

### 7.3.2. Interrogative Sentences

The previous analysis on simple sentence contains some of the sentences from the informants' responses, while writing the composition, "dialogue writing". The interrogative sentences from conversation had been analysed grammatically, in the following passage. The informants were expected to form interrogative sentences using the given clues, which are in statement pattern.

From these responses it has been found out that the informants are finding it difficult to construct the yes / no type interrogative sentence. Either they have replaced the imperative with a question mark, which denotes the interrogation in general, or they have placed the word order incorrectly, which leads to the ungrammatical construction.
1. Received: Your hobby are that is?
   (Yes, that is my hobby)

   Expected: Is that your hobby?

2. Received: You study in how?
   (I am studying well)

   Expected: How are you studying?

3. Received: Your sister, in mother, are fine
   (Yes, all are fine)

   Expected: How is your mother and sister? Are they fine?

4. Received: You’re a singer?
   (Yes, I am a singer)

   Expected: Are you a singer?

5. Received: You are going to music class?
   (Yes going)

   Expected: Are you going to the music class?

6. Received: We can go to play?
   (Yes)

   Expected: Shall we go and play?

7. Received: Mr. Raju your holiday when?
   (After completing the exams)

   Expected: When are your holidays Mr. Raju?
8. Received: Swimming did you know
(No, I don't know)

Expected: Do you know to swim?

9. Received: You have fine?
(I am fine)

Expected: Are you fine?

10. Received: You are going where in the holidays
(My wifes relation house)

Expected: Where are you going during the holidays?

7.3.3. Complex Sentences

Definition: A Complex sentence consists of one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. There are three kinds of subordinate clauses. They are,

1. The noun clause
2. The adjective clause and
3. The adverb clause.

7.3.3.1. Noun Clause

A noun clause is a group of words, which contains a subject and a predicate of its own, and does the work of a Noun.
7.3.3.2. **Adjective Clause**

An adjective clause in a complex sentence is a subordinate clause, which does the work of an adjective, and so qualifies some noun or pronoun in the main clause.

1. An adjective clause is introduced by a relative pronoun or by a relative adverb.
2. A relative pronoun introduces a co-ordinate clause.
3. Preposition is used before a relative pronoun in the adjective clause.
4. The infinitive with 'to' is often used as the equivalent of an adjective clause.

7.3.3.3. **Adverb Clause**

Adverb clauses are of many kinds and may be classified as adverb clauses of:

1. Time
2. Place
3. Purpose
4. Cause
5. Condition
6. Result
7. Comparison
8. Supposition of Concession.
7.3.4. Analysis

The following complex sentences are chosen from the responses of the informants. They are either without any of the nouns, adverbs or adjective subordinating conjunctions, or wrongly conjoined. Thus, the analysis deals with some of the complex sentences, of the responses while writing the English compositions.

1. Received: River flows steadily through the cities and villages if they stop me in canals and dams.

   Expected: River flows steadily through the cities and villages unless people stop it in canals and dams.

   Though the informant has selected the correct adverb subordinate clause for writing the complex sentence, he has committed an error in choosing the correct adverb clause of condition. In the above context the apt subordinating clause should be “unless” and not other items such as if, whether etc. The conjunction “unless” refers to the meaning “if not”, whereas “if” conjunction refers to condition or supposition. The above context describes that the river flows steadily without any obstacle unless the people build dams across it.

2. Received: I do not know the book is available here or not.

   Expected: I do not know whether the book is available here or not. (Or) I do not know if the book is available here are not.
The above sentence is incorrect because the informant has not used the adverb clauses of condition in a complex sentence. So the subordinating conjunction "whether", which has to be added in the complex sentence helps in introducing first or both of the alternative possibilities. In this context it is used to find out the possibility, if the book is available or not.

3. Received: The river flows from snow melts.

Expected: The river flows when snow melts.

The informant has constructed an incorrect complex sentence. The relative adverb “when” has to be added as an introducing subordinate adjective conjunction to the above sentence instead of the preposition “from”. Only then the sentence will be completely correct in its structure as a complex sentence.

4. Received: We have arranged a function in our college will be held on 10.12.04.

Expected: We have arranged a function in our college, which will be held on 10.12.04.

The above sentence is erroneous because the informant has not used any subordinate conjunction in a complex sentence. This sentence will be correct only if the interrogative relative pronoun “which” is placed as a subordinate conjunction to frame a correct complex sentence.
5. **Received:** The chairperson of the college I invite you for the function.

   **Expected:** As a chairperson of the college, I invite you for the function.

   The adverb clauses of cause or reason should be introduced as a subordinating conjunction to the above complex sentence. The adverb “as” should be used as a subordinating conjunction.

6. **Received:** You come to the function, our college students and staff will be so happy to see you.

   **Expected:** If you come to the function, our college students and staff will be so happy to see you.

   The informant has just constructed a long sentence with a comma to give two separate messages. He has framed the first part of sentence as, “you come to the function” and the second sentence is framed as “our college students, and staff will be so happy to see you”. This ungrammatical sentence will become grammatical if the sentence is converted into a complex sentence by adding the adverb clause of condition, “if”.

   The addition of this subordinating conjunction gives a complete meaning to the sentence and it states that, if the chief guest accepts to preside over their college function all will be happy to meet him.

7. **Received:** There are about 12 colleges in Coimbatore will participate in our sports day meet.
**Expected:** There are about 12 colleges in Coimbatore which will participate in our sports day meet.

The interrogative relative pronoun, "which" should be added as a subordinate conjunction to the above incorrect sentence to get a complete meaning.

8. **Received:** I am given the opportunity I will try my level best.

**Expected:** If given the opportunity I will do my best.

The above sentence is incorrect because the informant has used any conjunctive, as the subordinating conjunction in the above complex sentence. So the conjunction “if” has to be placed in the initial position of the sentence to form a correct complex sentence.

**7.4. Long Sentences and Punctuation**

The careful drafting of sentences is perhaps the most important step of all in creating an easily understandable piece of writing. While checking over the frequency of the punctuation marks, it is found that the informants have not marked it appropriately. The informants have constructed lengthy and faulty sentences. These sentences are overloaded with words and that is cramped and thereby ungainly, straggly, long sentences are produced. Some sentences do not have any punctuation marks. Even the sentences are not marked with appropriate capital letters or full stops. Some punctuation marks and their usages are given in the following table:
## Table - 7.1.
### Use of Punctuation Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Letters</strong></td>
<td>For the first letter of a sentence</td>
<td>Fishing is popular in Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For countries, nationalities, languages, religions, names of people, places, events, organizations, trademarks, days, months, titles</td>
<td>Portugal, Africa, Russia Moslem Joanne, John, Dubai, Geneva, the World Trade Fair, Jaguar, the Internet, Sunday, February, Mr./Mrs. /Ms. / Dr. / Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For titles of books, films, etc.</td>
<td>Silence of the Lambs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For abbreviations</td>
<td>OPEC, AIDS, WWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Stop</strong></td>
<td>At the end of a sentence</td>
<td>I'm going for a walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK / Period</td>
<td>Sometimes after an abbreviation</td>
<td>Marton Rd. / Mrs. White / Dr. Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As the decimal point in figures and amounts of money. This is usually read out as 'point'</td>
<td>£ 3.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To separate parts of email and web addresses. This is read out as 'dot'</td>
<td><a href="http://dictionary.Cambridge.org">http://dictionary.Cambridge.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question Mark ?</strong></td>
<td>After a direct question</td>
<td>What's your name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To show doubt</td>
<td>Sidney Morgan (1898? – 1972) was little known until after his death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Exclamation Mark | At the end of a sentence in order to show surprise/shock, etc. | I can’t believe it!  
Ouch! Yes! |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To indicate a loud sound</td>
<td>Manhattan Beach</td>
<td>Bang!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>Between items in a list</td>
<td>I need peas, butter, sugar and eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To show a pause in a long sentence</td>
<td>They didn’t want to eat before I’d arrived, but I was an hour late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When you want to add extra information</td>
<td>Lucy, who I told you about before, will be coming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before tag questions</td>
<td>You do love me, don’t you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>For missing letters</td>
<td>I’ll (I will), it’s (it is), don’t (do not)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>Between items in a list or a quotation in a sentence</td>
<td>You need the following:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | In the US following the greeting in a business letter | Paint, brushes, water, clothes.  
| |  | Dear Customer:  
| |  | Dear Mr Stein: |
| Semi-colon | To separate two parts of a sentence | I spoke to Linda on Monday;  
| |  | She can’t come to the meeting tomorrow. |
| Hyphen | To join two words together | Blue-black  
<p>| | To show that a word has been divided and continues on the next line | His air of sadness str-uck everyone in the room. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dash</th>
<th>To separate parts of sentences</th>
<th>The car – the one with the broken window – was parked outside our house.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To mean “to”</td>
<td>The “London–Edinburgh” train leaves every morning at eight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation Marks /</td>
<td>To show that words are spoken</td>
<td>“I’m tired,” she said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK also inverted Commas</td>
<td>To show that someone else originally wrote the words</td>
<td>“Let’s go,” he suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She had described the school as ‘not attracting the best pupils’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.1. Analysis

The following sentences chosen from the informants’ responses, show that while constructing the long sentences they have committed a lot of errors. Some of the informants have replaced the questions as response in their answer sheets while writing the English compositions. The informants have constructed long sentences without any punctuation marks like comma, semi colon, full stop, capital letters etc. They have not used the correct grammatical
features like prepositions, articles, verbs and so on. Hardly have they
given a meaningful sentence.

They produce sentences that mislead and do not agree with the context, by not using the correct grammatical features like prepositions, articles, verbs and all other lexical categories etc., which result in a miscellaneous construction. The wrong sentences are presented in the following passage.

1. In my college inter competition has been function has 30.12.04 in the day has been Chief Guest to the college has yours selected so has been in our competition on my college so please coming on the function.

2. We the department of microbiology students had planned to inaugurate an association in our college so we please request you to come to the association function as our SPL chief guest and keep up the function in ground manner.

3. In the dated at 08.12.04 at Sankara College will celebrate the annual day function so you will come to celebrate the function with best so you will attend the function at Evening 5.00 p.m. to 8.30 pm.

4. So the principle and chair person discussed to VIP's call seat lastly we decided to you ..... you come and address the function in our campus.
5. In my area, the boats and ships are crossed in my big port falls into sea at big port in every area a cranes, hoist are cost through a big port in the falls at a sea in the my area etc...

6. I will wanted to some books for my own helpness to studying so I am want to four books for parcel to A.B.T. service and I will attached from D.D. for 500 rupees please grand me send books.

7. I am a student in microbiology, I want some person reading books, because in improved my knowledge, and extra knowledge gain in English so far please give me a books immediately.

8. All the Hindus wake's up in the early morning and keep's oil on their head and bath's and they wear near clothes and go to the temples to praise their lord.

9. Hindus dress themselves in a grand manner and to go to temples and offers their prayers to the God and they were take a lunch of non-veg. (syntax).

10. The colour of the river is refers than the mood of the day cultivated fields on banks; irrigation canals taken off, please village and small towns follow through a big town.

11. I come as spring in mountains or from a glacier, mountain torrent, rockey bed, water-falls, tributaries, swollen when snow melts, reaches plains, slow steady river, cultivated fields on banks, irrigation canals taken off; I passes through villages and
town and flows through a big town I am polluted by boats and ships.

12. It takes off the irrigation canal passes villages and small towns finally it flow to the big town there the water is polluted by number of ships and boats finally it flows into the sea at big port etc.

13. The tributaries swollen when snow melts, reaches plains, slow steady river are cultivated fields on banks, irrigation canals taken off; passes through villages and small towns and flows through a big town, pollution of waters, boats and ships, fall into sea at big port etc.

14. I flow through river and cultivated the field on banks it is use to grow the crop and grains and irrigation canal are been taken off from sea village and town and cultivated are I used flow long towns and most populated area to reach to sea above the boat and ship use to run and fall in big port of sea.

15. In reply of the advertisement in yesterday's "Hindu" calling applications from qualified under graduate degree holders for the post of secretary in your firm, I wish to offer myself as a candidate for one of them and give below the particulars of my "Bio-data".

16. It will be tributes and swollen from snow falls and reached to plain and it become slow steady river come cultivated become banks and next passes to small villages and town and flow
through big towns pollution to water ships and boats at final I will fallen to big sea to flooded.

17. I will reach the plains and small steady river send to the cultivation bank of field and I will kept to the irrigation canal and sent to the villages, and small towns and flow to the big town.

18. The River coming in the rain, the any drop the water into the all drop comes in the river, the river as spring in mountains, and the glacier, water falls in the coming route the a electric in the falls, and the river into the going in a town side is a pollution.

19. The river it a spring mounting because, torrent a rockey bed of river formed of the glaicer, into the mountain, torrent and the rockey bed a tone the water reach water falls.

20. They are a gathering in The water, The cultivated field. But can a tank, The irrigation lands taken water in The villages and men small towns.

21. The mans used to the river cooling and bathing and any other work in vere Importan one is the water water can be used properly with other Propeleam no But with use not safely for a very tangerly collara fevar Tesantey and always is a other propelam.

22. I am advertisement in Hindu paper in 30/11/04 in the advertisement has been secretary post has been good qualified in
the U.G. Degree and full computer knowledge has been posted for
the job in with letter Included for Bio-Data.

23. Water as flows these places up and down, lot of mountains, falls
from great height, flows many places destiny many mountains,
plains etc. It has flow from great falls from great height, flow
toward tributaries, rules has miling up and down.

24. When the rain is more the river moves into the centre and It
moves through the Homes and affect the people many of the
people will died in the over flow of river when the water had flown
in the great force. The ships and boat would shrink off it causes
damages to people and it may even leads to death after all these
things the river moves into a big port and join with many river.

7.5. Conclusion

The analysis on the informants' skill in writing the English
compositions has been under taken in this chapter in a brief manner.
It has been found that the informants have constructed incorrect
sentences in the target language. The informants' find it difficult to
construct sentences on their own. In compositions like “developing
hints”, “dialogue writing”, where they are required to construct
sentences on their own from the hints given but in the case of letter
writing they are able to write because they reproduce the body of the
letter from the given question itself. The letter is always in few lines
so it is easy for them to manage them. So from the responses it is
clear that the informants have difficulty in narrating passages on their own, on a specific topic.

The informants have also committed more number of errors in substituting the wrong tense, verb etc., and deleting or dropping the grammatical forms like punctuations which are appropriate to the given context; adding unwanted suffixes and prefixes, wrong word order, lexical choice and wrong spellings etc., in the sentences constructed by the informants while writing the sentences as response for the researchers part-II questionnaire, regarding the English compositions.

It is doubtful whether teachers can play an important role at college level. The interest and motivation has to come from the students especially at this level. They have to be very alert by not allowing the L1 influence at any stage to interfere while learning or applying the grammatical structures in the target language (English), which has been reflected a lot in the informants writing at different levels (morphology, lexical and syntax). An English sentence can in theory grow infinitely long and complex. But in general many studies into readability have shown that the longer and more complex a sentence becomes, the more difficult it is for the reader to understand.