CHAPTER III
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SYNTACTICAL USE IN NEWSPAPERS

3.1. General

"Syntax is the study of how words combine to form sentences and the rules which govern the formation of sentences". (Jack Richards, et al. 1985). According to David Crystal, "syntax is the traditional term for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language".

A sentence is the largest unit of grammar. It is a construction that can stand alone without people feeling it to be incomplete. A sentence is constructed according to agreed rules of grammar. It consists of one or more clauses. A clause consists of one or more phrases. A phrase consists of one or more words and words contain one or more morphemes. A sentence is thus the largest structure to which the rules of grammar apply. The way sentences are inter-related is what stylistics is concerned with. Sentences in any text, be it a novel, scientific report or journalistic writing, are used by writers with certain purpose in mind. So the sentences in a text occur in some logical arrangement and various linguistic devices are used to suit the purpose. Similarly, the length of the sentences varies according to the writer’s style and the context of occurrence. Therefore, the constructions may be either long or short and simple or complex.

3.2. Ideology through syntax in newspapers

The following section of this chapter attempts to look at some of the ways in which larger units of language can be used to represent social groups and to
promote a dominant cultural norm. The aspects that are discussed in detail are syntax, which deals with word order and the relationships that exist between elements in a clause.

To quote Danuta Reah (1998), "Syntax is an important factor in the way a text creates meaning". The way in which elements within a clause are ordered can give weightage to one or more aspects, and reduce, or remove, others. The relationship between elements plays a fundamental role here.

This section of the chapter attempts to look at the way these relationships work. In traditional grammar, verbs are often defined as 'doing words', that is, as actions. But it is not very helpful to try to label word classes using this definition as the following sentences demonstrate. Consider the following examples where the verbs are highlighted.

1. Madhuri was stunning.
2. Jessica Lall reported her son to the authorities.
3. Police arrested Arundati Roy yesterday.
4. Arundati Roy went voluntarily yesterday to the Nagpur police station.
5. The ex-supermodel weighs ten stone.
6. Khushboo is a mum!
The verbs highlighted in sentence numbers two, three and four could be described as 'actions' but others do not really fit the definition. 'Is', 'was' and 'weighs' refer more to states and processes.

Some of the verbs establish a relationship between two people or a group of people: Jessica Lall and her son: the police and Arundati Roy. Both parties are involved in the process: Jessica Lall performed the action of reporting; the object or target of her action is her son. The police have caused an action to occur – they have performed an action. The person affected by the action is Arundati Roy. In the other cases, only one person is involved in the process: Madhuri, Jessica Lall, the ex-supermodel and Khushboo. One of these verbs refers to an action – 'went' – but this action does not involve anyone else. The other verbs refer to states and create a relationship between a person and a condition. "Madhuri" and "stunning": "the ex-supermodel" and "ten stone": or between the different roles a person may have: "Khushboo" and "a mum".

This analysis gives a model of verb system that is useful for identifying the ideological function in texts. Verbs can be divided into two kinds – actionals and relationals. Actional verbs are those that refer to actions and relational verbs are those that refer to relations. (Hodge and Kress, 1993). Actional verb can be divided into those that have an agent or actor who causes the action and someone or something that is affected by the action. These verbs are transactives. The other actional verbs, for example, 'went' involves only
Arundati Roy. There is no identifiable person or thing affected by the action. Verbs like this are called non-transactives.

Relational verbs can either represent the relationship between someone or something and a quality or attribute (as in sentence one above), or indicate an equal state between two nouns (as in sentences five and six).

It is important to recognize that 'transactive' and 'non-transactive' do not mean the same as 'transitive' and 'intransitive'. To be 'transactive', a verb must represent an action that goes from the writer to the affected as in "Police arrested Arundati Roy". The label 'transitive' is applied to any verb that takes a direct object.

By selecting from the range of models, the producer of news texts can present the world to the reader with an ideological slant imposed upon it. The writer can present a set of people as actors and another set as the recipients of action.

3.3. Syntactical structures in newspapers

In the following section of this chapter, an attempt is made to find out the various kinds of sentence structures in news texts with a view to finding out the favored patterns. Simple, compound and complex sentences apart from phrases figuring in the language of newspapers have been examined.
3.3.1. Simple sentences

Any sentence, which has a subject and a predicate, can be defined as a simple sentence. This type of sentence structure is rarely seen in newspapers.

Example:

*The Commissioner of police visited the spot.*

((TH, 4.6.1998 p.6)

*Nigeria defeated Paraguay*

((IE, 21.6.1998 p.1)

*Foreign Secretary will be visiting Dhaka*

((IE, 29.6.1998 p.1)

*It made hilarious reading*

((IE, 29.6.1998 p.10)

*Industry seeks steps*

((TH, 24.6.1998 p.1)

*Government means business*

((TH, 24.6.1998 p.1)

3.3.2. Compound Sentences

A sentence with two independent clauses connected by conjunctive elements is a compound sentence.

Example:

*Even a loss of few minutes would adversely affect the schedule and lead to dislocation of traffic.*

((TH, 24.6.1998 p.1)
The scientist, a nuclear physicist, and an expert in warhead technology, said the request for the data came in the two weeks between India's recent nuclear tests and those carried out in retaliation by Pakistan.

(Please, 29.6.1998 p.1)

Pakistani authorities have denied there have been any defections, and said Pakistan had never intended to use its nuclear weapons against India.

(Please, 29.6.1998 p.1)

3.3.3. Complex Sentence

A complex sentence contains two or more sentences with at least one of which is a subordinate sentence. Complex sentences consist of a matrix sentence with one or more embedded sentences.

Example:

What the queen did not realize during her sojourn in rural Russia was that the villages and the contented people she saw were a great show created for her benefit by her trusted Governor Potemkin, to convince her that Russia under her reign was a land of milk and honey.

(Please, 29.6.1998 p.10)

Given that the composition of the expanded Ministry shows a striking lopsidedness in representation as between castes...
and regions, it is hardly surprising that the exercise, which the Chief Minister had undertaken apparently after discussions with his party stalwarts.

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.12)

South Korea, the world's eleventh largest trading country, may still be the earliest to recover, thanks largely to the large injection of funds and Seoul's adherence to the stern conditions imposed by the IMF-World Bank and the major contributors to its rescue package.

(TH, 25.6.1998 p.12)

3.3.4. Transformed Sentences

Transformation takes place as soon "as any kind of modification appears in a sentence of one of the basic types, that is, as encoders feel dissatisfied with original innocence and begin to taste the fruits of the exploration of wider knowledge, the basic sentence starts to become transformed" (Derbyshire, 1971).

Transformation means the processes of modification. Transformation adds elements to, drops, changes elements from the structures, which are chosen as basic, or input to the transformational process.
3.3.4.1. Interrogatives

Questions can be looked upon as structural variants of statements. In the language of newspapers interrogative sentences are found considerably, particularly in the sections like "Letters to the Editor". Interrogative sentences are found to be used, most of the times, for making a self-query expecting no reply.

Examples:

*Why not the Finance Minister instead of hankering after new assesses, concentrate on the existing assesses who are evading tax by unfair means?*

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.12)

*The dialectics apart, should anyone paint in the nude a deity held in reverence as mother by millions across the globe?*

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.12)

*Is it not obligatory on the part of Railway authorities to provide at least drinking water to the passengers?*

(TH, 4.6.1998 p.10)

*In the event of any threat to the BJP government, will the DMK go to the rescue?*

(TH, 25.6.1998 p.1)

*Will they wake up at least now, in view of the critical situation in the country caused by the international sanctions?*

(IE, 29.6.1998 p.10)
If not, wouldn't it be more advisable for her to rise above her suspicions and work towards creating a political partnership based on trust?

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.10)

3.3.4.2. Imperatives

A variety of transformed structure are commands or imperative sentences – is made by the omission of the subject and the use of the verb in the infinitive form. Using this type of sentences, the news writers suggest the readers and others the course of action to be followed in certain issues.

Example:

Urge all nuclear countries to join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as soon as possible.

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.14)

Establish a system to ensure that all nuclear countries prevent nuclear arms and related technology from spreading.

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.14)

Referees should not rule in the game

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.16)

Don't tackle from behind

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.17)
3.4. Long and Short Constructions

The language of newspapers is full of long sentences. It is quite common that whole paragraphs are, at times, made out of single sentences.

3.4.1. Lengthy Constructions

A sentence irrespective of the fact whether it is a simple, complex or compound, containing thirty and more words will be treated as a lengthy construction. A sample study of lengthy constructions was made in order to decide how lengthy a sentence should be to label it as a lengthy construction. Accordingly five sentences that ran to more than five lines in printed form were selected and it was found that on an average, a sentence comprising thirty words and more could be called "a lengthy construction".

Examples:

Studies in early childhood education have shown that there is no significant difference between children who have attended nursery school, and those who have not, where samples have been drawn from the middle and upper segments of the society.

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.26)

In this construction, an element of relativization is found. The children who have attended nursery school and those children who have not gone to any school are relativized.

But as long as the death penalty is not decisively done away with, the courts will continue to impose the sentence where
they think it is appropriate and the civil liberties movement will continue to appeal against these decisions and the death row population will languish in indefinite emotional torture.

(TH, 4.6.1998 p.10)

In this sentence, a sense of conditionality is found. Also the news writer is found empathizing with those who are going to meet with death penalty. This is evident in the phrase "the death row population will languish in indefinite emotional torture". Reservations against courts are also expressed implicitly in the phrase "the courts will continue to impose the sentence where they think it is appropriate". Not only this, the inability of the civil liberties movement against bringing about a ban on death penalty is also taken note of in the phrase "and the civil liberties movement will continue to appeal against these decisions". The ideology or the viewpoint of the news writer or that of the news organization over an issue thus, even while filing a news report, becomes evident in the way they construct their sentences.

Tuesday’s embarrassing hours in the Lok Sabha for the government cannot be dismissed as just a storm in a teacup - whether it was the backtracking on the revision of petrol prices or the climb-down on the decision to raise the price of urea, the Government has to accept responsibility for its own inefficiency in terms of inter ministerial coordination rather than try to attribute the entire confusion to a ‘communication gap’ as Mr. Sinha has done.

(TH, 4.6.1998 p.10)
This passage can be taken as an example for complex constructions, though not on grammatical lines, which require good language backing from the reader. The schema of words - embarrassing hours in the Lok Sabha, storm in a teacup, backtracking on the revision of petrol prices and “communication gap” consist of phrases and an idiom that cannot easily be comprehended by common man.

These phrases make the meaning of the sentence more complicated. A satiric attack on the government is evident in the phrases “embarrassing hours in Lok Sabha” and this is, according to the news writer, cannot be dismissed just as “a storm in the teacup” and this embarrassment is caused by the very government’s “backtracking on the revision of petrol prices” or by “the climb-down on the decision to raise the price of urea”. The lack of “inter ministerial coordination” is highlighted and government’s usual way of attributing such confusions to “communication gaps” is condemned.

Just as an imagined India, and even an India colored in the shades of political Hinduism provides cultural sustenance to those who have migrated from it, it is the migrants - in particular the NRIs - who become role models for the many resident Indians.

(IE, 16.6.1998 p.10)

This is a good instance of verbal fancy in which the news writer, at times, involves. The phrase “an India colored in the shades of political Hinduism” is quite figurative adding to the complexity of the sentence. This semantic
complexity is added up by "cultural sustenance". Moreover, it does not escape one's attention that the "political Hinduism" is disapproved of and this phrase is quite cynical in nature. The color of political Hinduism to India, the readers get the feeling on reading the sentence, is an unwanted and undesirable one.

_Yashwant Sinha's budget could well be the resumption of the pernicious nexus between the political and business establishments which had begun to weaken somewhat under the impact of reforms._

(IE, 3.6.1998 p.10)

The above example is an instance where the complicated use of phrase is found. The phrase "the resumption of pernicious nexus" is too complicated for the common reader to comprehend. The words 'pernicious' and 'nexus' are too difficult for the common reader to understand. The word 'pernicious' means destructive, harmful, deadly, evil, insidious, spiteful and malicious and the word 'nexus' means 'connection or network of connections between ideas, objects or persons'. Moreover, the word 'nexus' has a dose of negative connotation also.

To talk of lengthy constructions in newspapers further, it is interesting to note the embeddings in such constructions. The interpretations, inferences, views and opinions are found loaded in such embedded sentences. It has been observed that the news writers in employing embedded constructions have followed no specific pattern and their use depends upon the individual skill of
the news writer. In the case of lengthy constructions in novels, short stories etc.,
the writer aims at presenting psychological states of characters, descriptions
and the like in an elaborate manner whereas in newspapers, news writers
employ lengthy constructions to enumerate details regarding various news
items either to avoid misinterpretations by the readers or to load their inferences
on the readers. The following are some of the examples where such sentences
are found.

Example:

BJP still to 'contact' Jayalalitha

Senior leaders of the RSS met the Prime Minister Mr. Atal
Behari Vajpayee and the Union Minister, L.K. Advani, at the
Prime Minister's residence on Sunday even as it became
clear that there were no signs of a thaw in the strained
relationship between the Vajpayee Government and one of its
constituents AIADMK.

(TH, 30.6.1998 p.1)

Matrix Sentence: Senior leaders of the RSS met the Prime Minister Mr. Atal
Behari Vajpayee and the Union Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, at the
Prime Minister's residence on Sunday

Embedded Clause: 1. even as it became clear that there were no signs of a
thaw in the strained relationship between the Vajpayee
Government and one of its constituents AIADMK.

In the above example, the matrix sentence informs the readers the fact that the
senior leaders of RSS met the Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and the
Union Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani at the Prime Minister's residence. The embedded clause 1 is about the news writer's inference of the situation. The news writer infers that there is no possibility of improvement in the strained relationship between the Vajpayee government and the party that causes trouble, the AIADMK. In a way, it is also implied that the meeting of senior RSS leaders with the Prime Minister and the Union Minister is going to yield no positive result.

**Yashwant Sinha allays industry's fears**

*The programme of disinvestments in public sector undertakings would be carried through, Mr. Yashwant Sinha said, and added that whatever doubts he himself might have had about the policy had vanished once the left parties started criticizing it called a bandh on the issue.*

(TH, 30.6.1998 p.5)

Matrix Sentence: The programme of disinvestments in public sector undertakings would be carried through

Embedded Clause: 1. Mr. Yashwant Sinha said

2. and added that whatever doubts he himself might have had about the policy had vanished once the left parties started criticizing it called a bandh on the issue.

Here the Finance Minister takes a dig at the left parties' attitude towards the governmental policy of disinvestments. His comment amounts to that the very opposition of left parties to the programme of disinvestments is a very good sign
of the policy being good one. This is evident from the embedded clause 2 "and added that whatever doubts he himself might have had about the policy had vanished once the left parties started criticizing it called a bandh on the issue."

Accreditation of colleges: First list by mid-July

It was heartening that in Tamil Nadu, thanks to the initiative taken by the Directorate of Collegiate Education, as many as 10 Government colleges had applied for accreditation and grading.

Matrix Sentence: It was heartening that in Tamil Nadu as many as 10 Government colleges had applied for accreditation and grading.

Embedded Clause: 1. thanks to the initiative taken by the Directorate of Collegiate Education

It is given to understand that the application for accreditation by ten colleges would not have been possible but for the initiatives taken by the Directorate of Collegiate Education. It is also given to understand that such an effort by the Directorate is to be appreciated. This sentiment is evident by the use of the word ‘heartening’ in the Matrix sentence.

Accreditation of colleges: First list by mid-July

At present, in most places, the Principals were appointed according to seniority, and it has been felt that not only seniority, but aptitude, initiative and qualities of leadership
Matrix Sentence: At present the Principals were appointed according to seniority in most places.

Embedded Clause: 1. and it has been felt that not only seniority, but aptitude, initiative and qualities of leadership should also be taken into consideration.

Here the news writer tends to convey his reservations over the method followed for the appointment of the Principals. His antipathy is generalized in the phrase 'it has been felt'. He gives the readers to understand that the method followed at present is not to the liking of the people concerned. Moreover he emphasizes the qualities, apart from seniority, that are needed to be considered for the selection of the Principals – aptitude, initiative and leadership.

**Malpractices in examinations : Counter this canker**

*If the teachers are made aware of this great role and if they act in a manner befitting their role, the education system will vibrate with strength, leading to the elimination of all evils in the system, including malpractices in the examinations.*

Matrix Sentence: The education system will vibrate with strength.

Embedded Clause: 1. if the teachers are made aware of this great role and if they act in a manner befitting their role.
2. leading to the elimination of all evils in the system,

including malpractices in the examination

It is for the readers to understand from the previous lines that the process of revitalizing the education system should start with motivating the teachers to play an active, responsible and noble role in the system. It is the teachers who shape the future of the country by moulding the character of the younger generations. It is expected that the teachers are to play a great role befitting their lofty position in the society. It is also to be construed that the teachers are solely responsible for the elimination of all evils in the educational system, particularly the malpractices in the examinations.

**Lewinksy to clear the air on sexual tryst**

*Monica Lewinsky, the former White House intern, whose alleged affair with President Bill Clinton set off a scandal that threatened to sink the Presidency, has offered to testify that she indeed had sex with Clinton, the "Washington Post" reported Sunday.*

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.13)

Matrix Sentence: Monica Lewinsky has offered to testify that she indeed had sex with Clinton.

Embedded Clause:

1. the former White House intern

2. whose alleged affair with President Bill Clinton set off a scandal

3. that threatened to sink the Presidency

4. the 'Washington Post' reported Sunday
Here the matrix sentence is remarkably augmented by the embedded clauses. Embedded clause 1 reveals the identity of the person – Monica Lewinsky. Embedded clause 2 talks of the illicit relationship she had with President Clinton sparking off a scandal. Embedded clause 3 is about the probable consequence of the illicit affair. And the last embedded clause is about ‘where the news was reported in’.

**Kumaratunga accepts Oppn challenge**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga has announced, seeking to dispel the impression fast gaining ground that she is afraid of elections, that she is prepared to hold Presidential elections this year.

(IE, 25.6.1998 p.13)

Matrix Sentence: President Chandrika Kumaratunga has announced that she is prepared to hold Presidential elections this year.

Embedded Clause: 1. Seeking to dispel the impression fast gaining ground that she is afraid of elections

The reader is given to understand by the embedded clause that it is widely believed by the people of Sri Lanka and elsewhere that the President Kumaratunga is afraid of holding Presidential elections. In ‘**the impression fast gaining ground**’ the news writer is understood in believing in what he encodes. His belief in what he says is well evident in this phrase.
Prime Minister AB Vajpayee Monday cautioned Pakistan against internationalizing the Kashmir issue because of the 'common experience of colonialism in the sub-continent' and said Islamabad should instead use bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Shimla agreement.

Matrix Sentence: Prime Minister AB Vajpayee Monday cautioned Pakistan against internationalizing the Kashmir issue

Embedded Clause: 1. because of the common experience of colonialism in the sub-continent

2. and said Islamabad should instead use bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Shimla agreement

In the example, matrix sentence is well supported by the two embedded clauses. Embedded clause 1 is about the reason why Kashmir issue should not be internationalized and also it talks about the consequence in case it is internationalized. Embedded clause 2 is about a possible way out from this political imbroglio. It informs its readers of the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue. It also suggests that only a bilateral dialogue on the lines of Shimla agreement could solve this issue.
Coast Guard heaves a sigh of relief

The Coast Guard on Friday heaved a sigh of relief when it successfully towed the 2,800 metric tones oil-laden Motor Tanker Ghanim Power, which was drifting since June 3, into the Chennai Port after an over 97.5 hours rescue operation.

Matrix Sentence: The Coast Guard on Friday towed the 2,800 metric tones oil-laden Motor Tanker Ghanim Power into the Chennai Port after an over 97.5 hours rescue operation.

Embedded Clause: 1. heaved a sigh of relief when it successfully
2. which was drifting since June 3

Here in the above example, the embedded clause 1 tells the reader that the mission of rescue is accomplished. It also informs that towing of the oil tanker was a very tough task to accomplish. This is evident from the phrase 'heaved a sigh of relief'. Embedded clause 2 is about the period the oil tanker was adrift.

With these embedded clauses, the news writer informs the readers that a task that was considered almost impossible was finally achieved.

R.K.Laxman feted

Mr.Laxman, who has had a long innings of more than half a century, is well known for his laconic human and fierce independence which cost him his first job in the Free Press Journal whereupon he moved to The Times of India.

(TH, 21.6.1998 p.9)
Matrix Sentence: Mr. Laxman is well known for his laconic human and fierce Independence

Embedded Clause: 1. who has had a long innings of more than half a century
2. which cost him his first job in the Free Press Journal
   whereupon he moved to The Times of India.

The embedded clause 1 informs the readers of the 'long innings' the cartoonist R.K. Laxman has had in cartooning. The matrix sentences talks about the qualities of the cartoonist — 'laconic human and fierce independence'. And the embedded clause 2 talks of the price the cartoonist had to pay for his qualities — 'his first job in the Free Press Journal.'

3.4.1.1. Verbal Fancy in lengthy constructions
In the case of lengthy constructions in the language of newspapers, verbal fancy i.e., playing with particular word all through the context, is often evident. The following example does exemplify this.

Example:

BJP, Left cross swords
Reacting to Mr. Jyothi Basu's remark at a public meeting in West Bengal on Sunday, that it was the country's "misfortune" to have Mr. Advani as the Home Minister, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said that it was West Bengal's "misfortune" to be led by a person who 'does not know the
Indian constitution' and to be ruled by a party which 'does not believe in the Indian constitution'.

(TH, 23.6.1998 p.13)

This sentence can be taken as an example for the verbal fancy in the language of newspapers by repeating quotes of personalities to draw the attention of the readers. In this example, the word “misfortune” has been found used by two political personalities belonging to opposite camps to unleash attack on one another.

3.4.2. Short Constructions

Short constructions are also seen though much less in proportion compared to the lengthy constructions; at the same time, it cannot be denied that the short constructions are very effectively made use of by the news writers.

Examples:

The answers is two fold.

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.10)

The place to begin was the budget

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.10)

That chance was sadly thrown away

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.10)

Life is all about priorities

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.1)

Miracles never cease

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.10)
3.5. Quotes

One of the strategies adopted by the news writers is quoting quotes verbatim - whatever may be the field. Direct speech is a mode of reporting what a speaker actually said without introducing any grammatical change. This takes the form of a direct dialogue or conversation. The language of newspapers is full of such quotes or direct dialogue as the persons concerned are quoted profusely.

Example:

"We have many things in common. This is one of them"

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.1)

"I don't recall any occasion, even in private conversations. This might have been her feeling or that of some people in Tamil Nadu".

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.1)

"I really don't know what kind of threat China poses"

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.13)

"I think it is possible that we have prevented a famine"

(IE, 22.6.1998 p.13)
"We will talk to Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav and United Front leaders to work out something. There should be no problem."

(TH, 25.6.1998 p.13)

3.6. Indirect Speech

When sentences spoken by the persons are reported they become indirect sentences. This kind of speech consists of two main clauses:

a. those which include the words 'if', 'that', 'whether' etc., and

b. those which do not include these words.

The former is known as 'bound reported clause' and the latter is known as 'free reported clause'.

3.6.1. Bound-reported Clause

Examples:

The Chief Minister said that there was no political significance in the Union Minister calling him on that morning.

(TH, 25.6.1998 p.1)

He said that some more arrests had been made subsequent to the presentation of the white paper in the assembly.

(TH, 25.6.1998 p.1)
3.6.2. Free-reported Clause

Examples:

*Mrs. Rabri Devi asked the State police to evolve a foolproof strategy to contain crime.*

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.1)

*He lashed out at the Left Parties for keeping the issue alive and making trips to Ayodhya instead of Bihar.*

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.1)

*He described naxalism as perverse manifestation of a faulty ideology.*

(TH, 16.6.1998 p.1)

3.7. Parenthesis

The Greek word ‘parenthesis’ means ‘an insertion beside’. Parentheses are used to cordon off and enclose supplementary or explanatory information, which would otherwise interrupt the basic drift of a sentence or a longer piece of writing. Often the ‘cordoned-off’ material may be removed without changing the overall meaning or completeness of the text; for example:

*If you fail again (which heaven forbid), you will not be promoted to the next class.*

Moreover parenthetical constructions are functionally loaded because they are the points where writer’s value judgments, feelings, opinions do appear and also it is where the writers attempt in elaborating certain points do occur.
The use of parenthesis in the language of newspapers can be classified under the following aspects: comparison, extra or additional information, sarcasm, wry humor, aside, explanatory cues, attention drawing and so on.

3.7.1. Comparison in Parenthesis:

Example:

*Be that as it may, cricket remains - though not, perhaps, for much longer – the most quintessentially English of all the sports the sceptred isle has devised (and they invented quite a few, from badminton and rugby to soccer and tennis).*

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.4)

Here the parenthesis makes a comparison between cricket and other games. The English isles has developed many a game like badminton, rugby, tennis and cricket. Of all these games, cricket remains the most quintessentially English. The parenthesis informs the reader that cricket is not the only game invented by the English and that the game of cricket may not retain the present status in the days to come.

3.7.2. Extra or Additional Information in Parenthesis:

*There followed prep school (where an end-of-term report noted that he “talked too much”), Eton (where he captained the second XI and kept wicket passably, unluckily missing out on selection to the school team), an unsuccessful stint in the family’s coffee business in Brazil (from which he was*
invalided out by acute peripheral neuritis, a disease that, he later joked, normally afflicts only pregnant women and alcoholics), and service with the Grenadier Guards in World War II (where his "untiring determination and cheerfulness under fire", according to the citation, won him the Military Cross).

Here in the given example, the parenthesis provides extra information. Firstly, there is extra information about prep school - where an end-of-term report noted that he "talked too much". Then about Eton - where he captained the second XI and kept wicket passably, unluckily missing out on selection to the school team. Secondly, about an unsuccessful coffee business in Brazil - from which he was invalided out by acute peripheral neuritis, a disease that, he later joked, normally afflicts only pregnant women and alcoholics. Lastly about the service with the Grenadier Guards in World War II - where his "untiring determination and cheerfulness under fire", according to the citation, won him the Military Cross.

**Stroking his way to the top**

Ajit joined St Joseph's Indian High School, and it meant that the family, staying near the airport, had to travel long distances (by Bangalore standards) to ensure that the son received the best of training at the Prakash Courts in Malleswaram.
The parenthesis, in some of the cases, provides additional information. In the case of the above-mentioned sentence, the parenthetical statement explains “long distances” with reference to people in Bangalore. The article is about the Karnataka lad Ajit Wijitilak’s biographical details that helped him to rise to the top of national badminton scene.

3.7.3. Sarcasm and wry humor in Parenthesis:

Performing Puppets

But parents these days are so desperate to teach their child to run the moment it takes its first faltering steps (some recite nursery rhymes even before they begin calling out their mom and dad), are so busy indoctrinating them with concepts like victory and defeat, that boys and girls hardly ever embark on a quest of self-discovery.

(TH, 30.6.1998 p.12)

Here the parenthesis conveys a sense of sarcasm on the attitude of parents towards their children. The desperation of the parents is well brought out in the parenthesis—some recite nursery rhymes even before they begin calling out their mom and dad. It is implied that parents of present days expect too much too soon from their children.

Chinese find a tenant for the “forbidden city”
It’s the biggest press party to accompany anyone anywhere anytime (with the sole exception, as someone pointed out, of reporters trailing Michael Jordan to a basketball game).

(TH, 24.6.1998 p.8)
The parenthesis in the above instances implies a wry humour. The news is about the American President Clinton's visit to China. The news writer makes fun of the pomp and glitz attached with the tour of the President. His entourage is compared to the band of reporters trailing the famed American basketball player Michael Jordan with a tone of sarcasm.

My dates with Elizabeth Taylor

There are marriages, too, to discuss. Taylor's tally of eight makes Steiger's four appear modest, but he is able to chat about the problems of being hitched to another star (in his case, Claire Bloom), the expense of divorce (his third cost him dear) and the folly of choosing much younger spouses (Larry Fortensky and Liz were almost contemporaries compared with Rod and his last wife, Paula Ellis, who was 33 years junior).

(TH, 21.6.1998 p.4)

The parenthetical usages provide information explaining Steiger's marriages in the linear order with a sense of wry humor. Recalling old times, Rod Steiger talks about the loneliness of Hollywood stars – the loneliness that prompted him to "date" Elizabeth Taylor and Joan Crawford. Divorced for the fourth time, he plays a proud father, who is but unwilling to sacrifice his freedom the fifth time.
RK Narayan self-aligned

The same dynamism and self-respect took Narayan to freelancing for All India Radio; and he gave radio talks. Typically, one of the projects he planned and researched for All India Radio was a documentary on the Madras Sappers and Miners – with as much professional application as he had reviewed earlier a crusty book as “Development of Maritime Laws in 17th century England” (and was never paid for it! Narayan remembered the book even six decades later. “the title stuck to me like a thorn”).

(TH, 21.6.1998 p.1)

Here the parenthesis serves like an innuendo providing humor and biographical information about the book that RK Narayan had penned sixty years back. A dose of humor is evident in the quoted phrase in the parenthesis “the title stuck to me like a thorn” and in the phrase “and was never paid for it!”.

3.7.4. Aside in Parenthesis :

BJP may send another review team to TN

A second Home Ministry team may be sent to Tamil Nadu to 'review' the law and order situation in the state – one of the demands voiced by Jayalalitha today (the first team had given a clean chit to the State Government).

(IE, 24.6.1998 p.1)
The parenthesis here in the above example serves like “an aside” – a reminder. Aside is a dramatic device that is employed to make a comment usually negative about a person in his or her presence, which could be heard only by the audience but not by the other actors on the stage. Here, The main statement talks about the insistence of Jayalalitha that a second Home Ministry team be sent to Tamil Nadu to review the law and order situation in the state. But it is clear from the parenthesis that sending such a second Home Ministry team may not yield the desired result as expected by Jayalalitha as the first team had given a clean chit to the State Government. In short, the parenthetical construction aims at reminding the readers about the previous team that had been sent to Tamil Nadu. Thus it revokes negative bias about Jayalalitha in the minds of the readers.

_Cyber Sightings_

_For poor Monica Seles, once the apple of every photographer’s eye, there are only six sites now (three less than even Pierce). And Teddy Tinling was no accident that happened to tennis. It was an idea whose time had come, which is why Chris Evert, with her frilly undies and her one-piece dresses (briefly imitated by Pierce), was the first tennis movie star._


In the case of first parenthesis in the above example, it serves like an aside and provides comparison. Added to that, wry humor is also involved in the parenthesis. Monica Seles is empathized as there are fewer web sites
committed to her compared to players like Mary Pierce. In the case of second parenthesis, again an aside is found which invokes wry humor. The writer is critical of the manner of dressing adopted by the women tennis players. In these above usages, the writer’s personal attitude is conveyed. These two items talk about the “girl-watching” part of the women tennis on Internet.

3.7.5. Explanatory cues in Parenthesis:

Going beyond the mere definition of tala, he sought to articulate the principles, modes and means of rhythmic organization. The Tala Dasa Pranas (literally meaning ‘the ten life-breaths of Tala) which is a very important canonical and musicological subject in Indian music, was his main reference point.

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.7)

Here in the above example, the parenthesis provides explanatory cues. The reader finds quite a few Indian expression in the article and the parenthesis helps him by providing him explanatory cues. This is also one of the important roles played by the parenthesis. When the writer would like to add extra information or explanations to the text, he makes use of parenthetical. In this example, the Indian term Tala Dasa Pranas is explained as “the ten life-breaths of Tala”.

Extracting the basic principles of theoretical premist, structure, form, function and performance practice from these ten modes which the realm of tala encompasses, he
explained and demonstrated their workings in the three music systems. The pranas, viz. anga (limb/organ), laya (tempo), kala (sub-division), kriya (action), jati (type), graha (house/commencement), kala (speed), yati (shape/caesura), marga (mode of construction) and prastara (permutation/combination) were enunciated, their subsections explained and illustrated through a wide range of relevant compositions (kritis, tilanas, khyals, taranas).

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.7)

In the above example, the parenthesis provides explanatory cues. Not only that, it also provides the equivalent words in English for the Indian expressions. The Indian terms found in the example may not be comprehensible even to the common Indians. They are handled by a few experts in the field of Carnatic music. Hence an understanding of this particular news article may not be possible with the parenthetical explanations and equivalences. In the case of the last parenthesis in the example, "a wide range of relevant compositions" is explained by "kritis, tilanas, khyals, taranas." In short, in the above example, parenthesis provides explanatory cues related to terms used in the world of music.

3.7.6. Attention Drawing in Parenthesis:

The Chief Minister Goes Home – Rabri Devi, Laloo Prasad Yadav’s shadow once again.
“Raja” as Laloo Prasad is popularly known to his cronies, is the de facto chief Minister, of that there is little doubt. Nothing can move in the state – including its Chief Minister – without his express consent. Recently an official function had to be cancelled since Laloo Prasad was not present at the resident (what bearing does his absence in his residence have on an official function?). The Chief Minister and the top senior bureaucrats found this very embarrassing of course, but said nothing.

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.10)

In the above example, the parenthetical usage draws the readers’ attention to bureaucratic log wash. It even mocks at the bureaucratic degradation in the state of Bihar. It raises a rhetoric question to stir the reading public over the pathetic political condition prevalent in the State. By the parenthetical question, it becomes evident that Laloo Prasad Yadav should be neglected in the polity of Bihar but he will never be neglected.

Friendly duel will herald change in US – Iran ties

In his landmark address to the US earlier this year, (which was dressed up in the form of an interview to CNN) the Iran’s President Mr. Khatami had called for a breaching of the wall of distrust between the two countries.

(TH, 21.6.1998 p.6)
In the above example, the parenthetical usage draws attention of readers towards political sham. It is given to understand that the idea of Iran's President Mr. Khatami's is to address to the US for which a CNN interview was "dressed up". This political sham or deception is very well brought out by the parenthetical usage.

In the instances discussed above, parenthesis have been used by news writers to denote censure, derive wry humor, provide explanatory cues and extra information, denote hypocrisy, sham and fraud etc. Thus it is evident that though reporters report events, actions etc., they do communicate idiosyncratic opinions and emotions like novelists and draw the readers' mind to reciprocate.

3.8. Parataxis

Parataxis is a variety of sentence structure in which the clauses are placed one after another but without words to indicate coordination or subordination.

There is considerable usage of this in the language of newspapers.

Example:

_Nigeria move up: Spain do not._

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.1)

_This typified India's approach to the game: anything you can do, we can do better._

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.18)
This was a two-fold plan: one to gain the two points and kick off with a good run rate but also to send a strong message to their opponents.

(IE, 21.6.1998 p.18)

Find solutions – the wise and the otherwise

(IE, 14.6.1998 p.1)

3.9. Summary
The syntactical use in newspapers has been analyzed under various headings in this chapter. As pointed out by David Crystal, "syntax is the traditional term for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language". In the next section of this chapter, how ideology in newspapers has been conveyed through the syntactical structures is dealt with eliciting instances from the data meant for the study. Syntax is a vital factor in the process of a text generates its meaning. The meaning thus generated depends upon how the elements within a clause are ordered. This ordering can give weightage to one or more aspects and reduce or remove others. Then actional verbs and relations are looked into with the comparison of verbs as defined in traditional grammar. An analysis is done on the selected sentences from the data for the study to understand the functions of actional and relational verbs and the ideology manifested through the deft handling of such verbs. Actional verbs can be divided into those that have an agent or an actor who causes the action or someone or something that is affected by the action. Relational verbs can either represent the relationship between someone
or something and a quality or attribute, or indicate an equal state between two nouns.

Then an attempt is made in the succeeding section of the chapter to find out the various kinds of syntactical structures in news texts with a view to find out the favored patterns. Simple, compound and complex sentences are found to be used profusely in the language of the newspapers. This has been highlighted with a number of illustrations from the data meant for the study. Interrogatives, imperatives are the transformed sentences that have been generally used in newspapers. A thorough look at the syntactical patterns used in the newspaper would make one realize that lengthy constructions are excessively made use of in the language of the newspapers. The embeddings in such lengthy constructions do play a major role in reflecting the overtones attached willingly by the news writer to a news report. The role of embedded clauses in encoding "the ideological slant" of the news writer has been looked into in detail through the examples taken from the data for the study. Looking at the ideological manifestations of the embedded clauses has convinced the researcher to analyze them closely. Though they greatly attribute to the news carried by the matrix sentences, most of such attributions are found to contain 'the stance' or 'the ideology' of the news writer or that of the news organization. The syntax that yields to such semantic exploitations is of great interest to anyone who is interested in the stylistic study of language used in a specific domain.
In continuance of the discussion ensued so far in the chapter, the researcher moves on to analyze the parenthetical use in the language of the newspaper. The parenthetical use is to cordon off and enclose supplementary or explanatory information, which would otherwise interrupt the basic drift of a sentence or a longer piece of writing. The writer's views, opinions, interpretations and inferences are expressed in the parenthetical use. In other words, parenthetical constructions are functionally loaded because they are the points where value judgments, feelings and opinions of the writers appear and at times, they also attempt in elaborating certain points in the main sentences.

Indirect speech, first person quotes and parataxis used in the language of the newspaper are also identified in the chapter. After these discussions, the study moves on to the next chapter to study the rhetoric of headlines in depth.