

Introduction

Punctuation is a formally and functionally differentiated subsystem of written language. Yet its significance does not go undisputed. Many researchers working on system linguistics and language typology consider punctuation as insignificant for the language system of a single language and for language comparison, as “too small”, and that it should be left to the orthographic “carping critics”. In the spelling discourse, punctuation is in turn often reduced to the official regulations, without recognizing the linguistic potential that lies in the syntactic, semantic, prosodic, but also information-structural and text-segmenting principles. Not to mention the everyday practice of writing, in which punctuation is carried out, but nonetheless used differently and individually variably depending on language, state, writing domain (school, authorities, private sphere, etc.) and medium. Even those who teach or at least have to evaluate punctuation as an orthographic subnorm, often assess the status of punctuation differently. It is therefore not surprising that language typology and comparative linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and standard language research have so far hardly considered punctuation as a field of study in their respective disciplines. Punctuation research was mainly conducted when it came to writing acquisition and teaching, or research on language norms. Especially in Germany, research into the history of punctuation has recently been experiencing an upswing. Although approaches to comparative research on punctuation can be found in individual works, contrastive punctuation research that integrates typological, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and didactic aspects is still a desideratum.

The aim of this volume is to discuss punctuation in a cross-linguistic and comparative way as well as from a synchronic and diachronic perspective. It follows in a tradition launched by the linguists Bodelsen, Jolivet, Lindroth, and Zwirner who established the “Committee on Questions of Punctuation and Comparative Syntax”¹ in 1936 at the 4th International Congress of Linguistics in Copenhagen. After the publication of the Committee’s documents (a compilation of texts from 14 European languages and their punctuation systems²), though, the tradition was no longer continued. The four thematic fields *system*, *norm*, *use*, and *acquisition* shed light on the topic in as many ways as possible. The first part deals with theoretic-

1 Original: *Komitee für Fragen der Interpunktion und der vergleichenden Syntax*, translated by A. Saller.

2 Bodelsen, Carl Adolf, Jolivet, Alfred, Lindroth, Hjalmar & Eberhard Zwirner (eds.) (1939): *Dokumente zur Interpunktion europäischer Sprachen* (= V^{me} Congrès International des Linguistes, Bruxelles 1939). Göteborg.

cal aspects of punctuation and is divided into the sections *system* and *norm*. The section *system* examines language systems individually or comparatively. In addition to synchronic considerations, systemic change is also examined from a diachronic perspective. The section *norm* combines contributions on the emergence of norms and standardizations in the field of punctuation, on deviations and differences and how these can be explained. The second part is devoted to practical aspects of punctuation and is divided into the subsections *acquisition* and *use*. The *use* section presents the actual use of certain punctuation marks: Contributions on punctuation practice in Japanese, Chinese, German, English, Swedish, Norwegian, and Russian give an insight into the broad spectrum of how punctuation looks like in typologically and graphematically different languages and how it is motivated. The *acquisition* section focuses on the role of punctuation in foreign language teaching and learning, and on teaching methods. Cases of doubt in punctuation are covered here as well.

Although the arrangement of the contributions within the volume is justified primarily by the division into the theory-oriented parts of *system* and *norm* and the practice-related parts of *use* and *acquisition*, various criteria of arrangement were considered. Studies about single languages are succeeded by comparative language analyses. Contributions on the same languages are in close proximity to each other. Language families played a role as well. Since the volume is bilingual German/English and these two languages also occupy the largest space, it is only reasonable to start from Germanic languages and let the progression continue through Romance, Slavic, Japonic and Sino-Tibetan languages. The comparative orientation of the volume becomes evident through the multilingual contributions in total. Furthermore, the punctuation marks that were brought into focus also played a role. Here, too, contributions on the same punctuation marks were arranged in proximity to each other. The synchronic or diachronic perspective was also considered and plays a role (albeit a minor one) for the arrangement. This resulted in the arrangement of the contributions in this volume, which is illustrated in the following table:

Author(s)	Language(s)	Punctuation Mark(s)	Synchronic/ Diachronic
<i>System</i>			
Neef	German	comma	synchronic
Lemke	German	comma	diachronic
Ferrari & Stojmenova Weber	German/Italian	comma	synchronic
Žagar	Croatian	punctuation in general	diachronic
<i>Norm</i>			
Reiner	German	comma	synchronic
Rinas	German	punctuation in general	diachronic
<i>Use</i>			
Voeste & Neumann	German	punctuation in general	diachronic
Eber-Hammerl	German	punctuation in general	diachronic
Oberwinkler	Japanese	punctuation in general	diachronic
Sun	Chinese	<i>juhao</i> ($\approx$ dot)	synchronic
Levin & Ström Herold	German/English/Swedish	colon	synchronic
Fuhrhop & Hettwer	German/English/Dutch/French	apostrophe, hyphen	synchronic
Peccorari & Longo	English/Italian	dash, ellipsis	synchronic
<i>Acquisition</i>			
Thurmair	German	punctuation in general	synchronic
Simonsen	German/Danish	exclamation mark	synchronic
Stark	German/Italian	comma	synchronic

A new feature of the volume is the punctuation index, which lists all punctuation marks covered, with corresponding references to authors and relevant page numbers, arranged alphabetically and by complexity of the mark.

System

Martin Neef puts comma placement in German into a model that falls within the framework of systematic orthography. His model is in principle transferable to other languages. It is particularly syntactic structural information about German that allows for the modeling of the comma system. He understands the sentence as a purely syntactic quantity. On this basis, comma placement in German can be summarized in three conditions which refer to the syntactic constructions subordinate order, subordination of sentences and subordination of infinitive constructions. What is special about these conditions is that they are not conceived as rules that prescribe the placement of commas in certain places, but rather identify particular positions within syntactic constructions that require marking. The comma is one possible marker. It is the default used when no other marker is available. In this way, all comma positions that are obligatory, and to a small extent, optional ones as well, are captured. Neef's model can be seen as a theoretically sound proposal for more extensive reform efforts.

In her contribution, **Ilka Lemke** deals with the origin of the comma and the systemic change regarding the comma and the virgule. The internal-dividing virgule </> in German prints was replaced by the comma <,> in the first half of the 18th century. The Latin comma had previously been used in Antiqua typefaces to mark Latin (or later non-native) text elements, while the virgule was generally used in Fraktur typefaces. Lemke demonstrates the comma's path into the German writing system via the typographical 'detour' of being placed in Antiqua in texts in which the virgule was used to mark foreign language elements. In addition to the two punctuation marks </> and <,>, printers increasingly used the hybrid Fraktur comma <,>, which can be seen as a bridging context between virgule and comma. The paper examines typographic variation and typographic change in early New High German on the basis of the prints used in GerManC. It then discusses the script-linguistic significance of the comma as an element of the German writing system and typography. In essence, Lemke describes a systemic change and how it can be explained, so that this contribution is classified here neither under *norm* nor under *use*, but under *system*.

Angela Ferrari and **Roska Stojmenova Weber** illuminate the comma in contrast from an Italian and German perspective. They use an approach that is both communicative and textual: It is based on the hypothesis that contemporary Italian punctuation is used according to communicative-textual criteria and not – as claimed in the widely used grammars and manuals – according to syntactic or prosodic criteria. The syntactic and prosodic regularities in applied punctuation are secondary phenomena that are associated with punctuation without any di-

rect determinative connection. In this perspective, the punctuation marks are divided into two units: On the one hand, the segmenting punctuation marks, which signal semantic units to form the text and its hierarchies, and on the other hand, the interactive punctuation marks, which enrich the semantic text units with illocutional, inferential and polyphonic values. The comma belongs to the class of segmenting characters, but behaves differently in Italian than in German: While the Italian comma has a communicative-textual application, the German comma is basically morphosyntactic in nature.

Mateo Žagar enriches this volume with a diachronic comparative study of punctuation principles in Glagolitic and Cyrillic printed editions from the Urach Protestant press (1561–1564). In the middle of the 16th century, Croatian Glagolitan priests in Urach near Tuebingen printed 28 editions and almost 30,000 copies in all three Croatian historical languages: Glagolitic (14), Cyrillic (8) and Latin (6). The orthographic practice of the oldest texts in the scripts was based primarily on early medieval Greek practice. Over time, the influence of the Latin script in the Croatian countries increased steadily and left its traces in the graphic design of medieval Glagolitic and Cyrillic texts. Punctuation marks are initially found in Glagolitic and Cyrillic books only in the editions of the Protestant printing house in Urach. On the basis of the biblical texts, Žagar attempts to assess the extent to which the editors and translators retained principles of punctuation or adopted Western models from the original texts they translated.

Norm

Tabea Reiner addresses the question to what extent norm-deviating punctuation says something about mental syntactic representations. In particular, correct comma placement in German follows syntactically sound norms, which, however, are not always observed in practical language use. This does not mean that non-standard punctuation in general or the placement of German commas in particular is completely random. Language users are rather guided by their own rules, and these could provide a point of reference for their mental representation of the language(s). In a corpus of German texts that are not edited but are supposed to comply with the norms (e. g. student term papers), non-standard commas are significantly more common after non-sentence adverbials in the prefield to the sentence than elsewhere. Reiner argues that this could be interpreted as evidence of the psychological reality of fields. Since Reiner reconstructs the use of the prefield comma in her pilot study, this contribution could as well be classified under *use*. Nevertheless, the focus here is on norm deviation and how it can be explained mentally, which is why it was classified under *norm*.

From the 17th century, there had been increasing efforts to specify and standardize punctuation, which ultimately led to its codification at the beginning of the 20th century as response to individual and liberal punctuation uses before. **Karsten Rinas** examines the question of whether these two opposing trends were related: Could the specification and codification of punctuation be understood as a means of compensating for the loosening up of sentence and text composition? He shows that this consideration ultimately leads to a system-theoretical conception according to which punctuation should be regarded as a means of textual structure in its (historically changing) relationship to other competing means of structure.

Use

Using the example of German manuscripts and incunabula from the 15th century, **Anja Voeste** and **Marko Neumann** took a closer look at the work of writers, composers and rubricators. While the writer executed the fair copy of a manuscript and the composer arranged for the typographical realization, the rubricators had the task of further decorating the text and adapting it for reading. It is possible that the craftsmen involved may have tried to increase the readability of the text by adding (different or additional) punctuation marks to emphasize the syntactic structure. This would mean, for example, that sentence boundaries would have been marked more or less regularly, but also an aesthetic and ornamental accentuation could have been intended. The manuscripts and incunabula examined are intended to provide information about the methods primarily used by the craftsmen and the extent to which their motifs can be generalized.

Franziska Eber-Hammerl gives an insight into the idioscriptal punctuation variation of writers in the 19th and early 20th century. Her study is based on the *Corpus of Patient Documents* (CoPaDocs) that includes private and official letters as well as resumes, diary entries or poems written by patients from psychiatric institutions. She points out that dialectal and foreign-language elements play a crucial role in the patients' variation in how to use punctuation. The patient texts contain Latin, English, French and Russian passages. Those foreign-language, but also dialectal insertions are integrated into the text by means of dashes, quotation marks, colons or without any markings at all. Eber-Hammerl argues that this can be traced back to various functions of the respective citation – such as highlighting one's own level of education.

Michaela Oberwinkler deals with punctuation in Japan from a diachronic perspective. Around the 5th century, Chinese characters came to Japan via Ko-

rea. The first Japanese texts were written in Chinese script (*kanbun*) and according to Chinese tradition, which, however, had no fixed guidelines for punctuation marks. In order to be able to understand these texts as Japanese texts, characters were inserted between the lines, which determined the reading order and made reading easier. These auxiliary characters can be regarded as a pre-form of today's punctuation marks. In Japanese *hiragana* syllabic writing, which eventually developed from the Chinese characters, the fast brush writing style (*sōshotai*) was used to indicate sentence endings and units of content by interrupting the brush stroke. Punctuation in the Western sense spread slowly in Japan through contact with the West. In 1906 the government published the first recommendation for the use of the five punctuation marks that are common today. Then, as now, the use of punctuation varies greatly from person to person. As digital communication progresses, the punctuation marks are on the retreat again, as they are now replaced by emoticons (*kaomoji* and *emoji*), especially at the end of a sentence, and the final *kuten* (circle characters), which are often replaced by an emoticon.

According to current knowledge, periods (*juhao*) in Chinese are used to finish a unit that expresses the completeness of an idea, while commas are used to separate two sentences within that semantic unit. **Kun Sun** investigates the question of how to recognize when an idea is complete and what other criteria play a role. Even though the setting of the *juhao* varies individually, it usually obeys unspoken rules. On a comprehensive empirical and statistical basis, he has developed a model to explain the use of this punctuation mark. Not only thematic incisions, but also, for example, local or temporal indications etc. have a great influence on the use of *juhao*. Sun's work contributes to a greater understanding of the interplay of various factors that determine the use of periods in Chinese.

Jenny Ström Herold and **Magnus Levin** compare the use of the colon in original German, English and Swedish texts and their translations. In translations, the character set of the source text is often transferred to the target text, yet punctuation has been largely overlooked in translation studies. How often and in what way are colons used in German, English and Swedish originals? How are colons reproduced in translations? To what extent are they overused or underused compared to the norms of the target language? When are colons added in translations? These questions will be answered by the study of the corpus English-German-Swedish of the Linnaeus University (LEGS) which comprises non-fiction books from the 2000s.

Nanna Fuhrhop and **Caroline Hettwer** look at punctuation marks such as the apostrophe or the hyphen that are connected to or are part of a word. They pursue the question of how to compare languages in a structured and meaningful way. Based on official sets of rules in dictionaries (but including non-standard uses as well), they compare the use of the apostrophe and the hyphen in

English, German, French, and Dutch, applying parameters that work across languages while allowing language-specific properties to be investigated as well. For the study of the apostrophe, the parameters are [$\pm$ elision], [$\pm$ obligatory], and the type of boundary marks. For the hyphen, its [$\pm$ obligatory] occurrence and the various reasons why it is used will be compared, as will the features of compound spelling in the four languages. This research contribution is intended to establish an approach to comparative graphematics in the long run.

Filippo Pecorari and **Fiammetta Longo** are dedicated to the dashes $\langle \rightarrow \rangle$, $\langle \leftarrow \rangle$ and the ellipsis $\langle \dots \rangle$ in English and Italian, since there is functional overlapping of these punctuation marks in both languages. After an overview of which functions $\langle \rightarrow \rangle$, $\langle \leftarrow \rangle$ and $\langle \dots \rangle$ are assigned in grammars and studies, they redefine this functional area on the basis of a communicative approach. They compare these punctuation marks in question, particularly with regard to communicative and prosodic functions, and present similarities and differences. While, for example, Italian uses only the ellipses for prosodic fragmentation such as sentence breaks or reformulations, English can use both dashes and ellipses for prosodic fragmentation: Abrupt sentence terminations are preferably represented by dashes and sentences that end less abruptly are preferably marked by ellipses.

Acquisition

Maria Thurmair investigates why orthography, and punctuation in particular, plays a rather small role in German as a foreign language. She also raises the question whether the teaching of punctuation poses a particular challenge for students of German as a foreign language. She explores whether there is a gap here, the causes of which can be investigated and plausibly justified, or whether it is assumed that the acquisition of German punctuation in foreign language learning is incidental and does not have to be taught. Do learners of German as a foreign language have any difficulties at all in acquiring and applying punctuation rules in German? If so, where in particular? What role does the learners' first language with its rules of punctuation play in this? To answer these questions, interviews were conducted with 108 (mainly non-native) teachers of German as a foreign language from 11 different countries. Thurmair presents the results of her survey, discusses punctuation with regard to its relevance in the field of German as a foreign language, and gives first suggestions and considerations for the concrete implementation in teaching.

Irene Simonsen compares the use of exclamation marks in German and Danish with the aim of transferring the results into didactic concepts. As part of the

dramatic character exclamation, the exclamation mark in both languages serves to increase the intensity in the text and to emphasize the writer's emotional involvement. Based on a comparison of standards in the two language systems, this study examines the use of the exclamation mark in practice. The pragmatic-functional study focuses on writing in the first and second language and also touches on stylistic issues. The corpus consists of native Danish texts, native German texts and Danish texts written by German native speakers as part of their written tasks in Danish classes.

Linda Stark is also concerned with the German-Italian interface – more precisely with how Italian learners of German use commas, and with inter- and intralinguistic causes of errors. It has been empirically proven that comma placement of native German writers is far from being accurate. The high frequency of errors of native German writers is associated with implicitly acquired strategies that are based on different textual characteristics (lexical, prosodic, semantic), but, in contrast to the codified rules and the system of German comma placement, are hardly compatible with the syntactic principle. The extent to which motives other than syntactic commas are used for comma placement in German as a foreign language, and what role interference with the respective system of the first language plays in this, will be clarified in Stark's contribution.

