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SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY SOME PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH PUNCTUATION

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Research on the theory of punctuation reflects modern trends in linguistic science towards a comprehensive analysis of the language system as a means of realizing the extra linguistic subjective knowledge of a person. Punctuation marks, which are special symbols of the printed text, play an important role both when it is generated by the author and when it is subsequently interpreted by the reader, therefore, they have a high degree of anthropocentrism.

Considerable freedom of choice of non-verbal means, in particular punctuation marks, is especially relevant for modern English printed text [Sobol 2009].

This article sets the following tasks:

1. Determine the place of punctuation in the modern language system.
2. To note a number of historical phenomena that influenced the formation of the English punctuation system.
3. To identify the main urgent problems in the punctuation system of the modern English language.
4. Justify the need to study punctuation in the process of teaching English as a foreign language.

Punctuation is largely international in nature [Shapiro 2006]. This can be easily explained by historical factors: the development of writing (including the



moment of its inception and even its preconditions), the emergence of the alphabet, the invention of cuneiform and then printing, the improvement of typographic practice - all this was largely global, worldwide. On the other hand, the punctuation systems of individual languages are individual and specific, which is explained by both linguistic and extralinguistic reasons: differences in morphological, syntactic, phonetic structure, culturally determined characteristics of speakers of a particular language, etc.

Thus, with the external universalism of punctuation marks, we observe significant discrepancies in their practical application. For example, in Spanish, the setting of interrogative and exclamation marks not only at the end, but also at the beginning of a sentence (upside down) is associated with the peculiarities of intonation, which changes significantly throughout the entire sentence and highlights not individual words, but semantic rhythmic groups.

As a result, inverted signs "anticipate" the intonation of the sentence and allow more accurately convey the mood of the speaker in writing. Regarding the use of interrogative and exclamation marks in Russian and English, it can be noted that in Russian they are used much more often, up to the setting of multiple signs at the end of a sentence, while in English, the features of oral speech and the speaker's mood are usually conveyed by lexical means.

Thus, the adequate use of punctuation marks is important, first of all, not on a global, global scale, but within a specific language (culture), so that speakers (readers) of this language use punctuation adequately, in accordance with accepted norms and established traditions [Shapiro 2006].

In modern languages, with the increase in the functions of punctuation marks and their semantic load, there is an increasing involvement of the personality of the writer and reader in the process of interpreting printed text. Baudouin de Courtenay rightly notes that a number of punctuation marks are used mainly to emphasize "the semasiological side, indicating the mood of the speaker or writer and his attitude to the content of the written information" [Signs 1963: 238].



Punctuation can be characterized as a relatively "young" part of the language system, since the need to use punctuation marks in the history of the emergence and development of writing did not appear immediately. This need was primarily due to the spread of printing and the desire of people to convey in writing a variety of intonational and semantic features of oral speech, including dialogical. In its most general form, the purpose of punctuation marks is to clarify the written text and make it easier for the reader to read and understand. The high information content of modern printed text promotes the use of a large number of signs and symbols for quick and effective orientation of the reader in it.

The term "punctuation" in English grammar is interpreted broadly and involves the use of two large groups of characters in writing - punctuation marks proper and typographic symbols used for graphical division of written text. This understanding of punctuation is justified by the fact that both signs and symbols are designed to simplify the perception of the text as much as possible, to place semantic accents, to convey the position of the author.

With regard to punctuation marks used in modern English, the following features can be distinguished:

1. Relatively free, loosely regulated use of most signs (for example, a hyphen for writing complex words, a comma before 'and', etc.).
2. Some discrepancies in the use of punctuation marks in the practice of printing houses (publishing houses). For example, the use of single quotes (“”) is common in American publishers, while in British publishers double quotes (“”) are common.
3. The presence of clear rules for the use of capital letters for writing certain groups of words, for example, nationalities. In general, punctuation marks in English are used "less frequently and with less systematicity" than, for example, in Russian or German [Istrin 524].

The solution of questions about the purpose of punctuation gives rise to various directions in its theory. So, in the Russian language, (3) logical, syntactic



and intonational directions are well known. The development of the logical-syntactic and intonational directions also takes place in the English language. Their feature is a significant dependence on a number of historical factors and personalities and on the history of the development of the English language in general. English punctuation first introduced in printed text appeared in the 1470s, when William Cuxton began using the printing press. The first characters were a slash, which was used to indicate groups of words, a colon (:) for long pauses, and a period (.) To indicate the end of a sentence. The work of individual writers and scholars, such as William Tyndale, an English humanist and Bible translator, contributed to the development and improvement of punctuation marks, which led to the appearance of the comma (comma), replacing the slash in writing, as well as semicolons (semi-colon).

The systematization and unification of punctuation marks is associated with the name of the Venetian publisher Aldo Manuzio, who "in the 16th century streamlined the composition of punctuation marks for Latin writing, their graphic design and some rules for their use, which in general terms have come down to our time" [Koryagina 2004: 252].

Until the 16th century, the use of punctuation served the purpose of improving oratory skills and displaying pauses of various lengths in written text. According to this approach, which can be conventionally called "intonational-rhetorical", punctuation marks served as a means of segmentation of the printed text for a more convenient reading of it before the public. Thus, "the need for a pause, the need to make a stop was determined by ear, and not by logic" [Koryagina 2004: 250].

The emergence of the logical-syntactic direction in the theory and practice of English punctuation is associated with the name of Benjamin (Ben) Johnson, an English playwright of the 17th century, a poet, a younger contemporary of Shakespeare. Ben Johnson is the author of *The English Grammar for the Benefit of All Stranger Out of His Observation of the English Language Now Spoken and in*



Use, abbreviated a variant of which is known as "The English Grammar". This book, written in 1617 and published in 1640, introduces punctuation for the first time, based primarily on syntactic principles. By this time, almost all modern punctuation marks were already widely used in English. In the first editions of Shakespeare's plays, in addition to the period and comma, there are signs such as the colon, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point. The development of the logical-syntactic principle in the English punctuation system, on the one hand, contributed to the ordering of signs, and on the other hand, led to the excessive use of individual signs, mainly commas, which contradicted the natural intonation structure of English speech. In a number of reference publications, the tendency to use a large number of punctuation marks is indicated by the terms "over-stopping", "close punctuation" (punctuation with frequent use of punctuation marks); "Excessive punctuation", "heavy punctuation" [The New Encyclopedia 1994: 1050].

Until the 18th century, the English written text abounded with commas, which separated all subordinate clauses and phrases that were relatively independent in syntactic terms. As a result, it became obvious that this method of graphic design of the written text prevents its adequate understanding, distracts from the perception of what is written, does not bring clarity, does not reflect the author's intention. [The New Encyclopedia 1994]. The publication in 1906 of the work of the English lexicographers G.V. and F.G. Fowler's "The King's English" pioneered the use of "weakened" punctuation ("open punctuation", "understopping") in English. The authors believed that following the "lightweight" style in the placement of punctuation marks in a sentence is optimal for the English language, while formalism and an abundance of conventions are unnecessary and not justified for the purposes of communication. This tendency towards the omission of "unnecessary" signs persists to this day and is considered as the most natural way of conveying the features of oral speech in writing [Sobol 2009]. Some researchers of the English punctuation system, for example N.A. Kobrin, believe



that "English punctuation is generally characterized by following, first of all, the intonation side of speech" [Kobrin 1961: 9].

However, in general, pauses in the flow of speech and stops in syntactic design, as a rule, coincide, therefore, when choosing punctuation marks in modern English, both logical-syntactic and intonational principles are taken into account. Another important factor in the placement of punctuation marks in the text, which appeared in the XX century, is "the principle associated with the manifestation of the author's personal style" [Koryagina 2004: 256]. In order to influence the reader, which is especially clearly manifested in fiction, the authors use, in addition to lexical, and punctuation means. Therefore, "the individual preferences of the author, which are realized in his sometimes very specific arrangement of punctuation marks," begin to be investigated using the material of various languages, including English, under the term "author's punctuation" [Koryagina 2004: 256]. Further study of the problems of punctuation in English is of great theoretical and practical importance. In theoretical terms, interdisciplinary studies of the issues of English punctuation at the intersection of sociolinguistics, discourse theory and grammar are important.

In the 5th comparative plan, the search for the general and specific in the culturally conditioned use of signs of the organization of written discourse is of interest. The questions of systematization of signs in the English language, the study of individual signs, taking into account the changes taking place at the present stage of its development (for example, the study of the functions of a hyphen with a wide distribution of holophrastic constructions, apostrophes, brackets) remain open.

In practical terms, the study of punctuation problems is associated primarily with the formation of punctuation literacy, in particular, among students of philology. Fundamental knowledge in this area allows not only to avoid mistakes in the design of the written text, but also to adequately interpret the printed text,



using punctuation tools as an effective method of speech impact and transmission of the author's intention.

Knowledge of the punctuation norms allows you to accurately recognize the author's deviations from the norms of the use of signs, justified by the goals of communication, style, genre of the work, as well as the purpose of the author's punctuation, the predominant use of certain signs, which is of an individual nature. The study of the stylistic possibilities of punctuation marks in texts of various functional varieties allows one to develop linguistic intuition and reveal the communicative and pragmatic potential of individual signs and the entire punctuation system at any stage of the development of the English language.

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