

Darstellung der wissenschaftlichen Zielsetzung/ Presentation of the scientific objective

In addition to the content-related objectives, the ComPunc project also aims at networking and strengthening international relations and cooperations. Through the MISTI cooperation program, a cooperation between the MIT (USA) and the University of Regensburg (MISTI = *MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives*) has been established. Within the framework of this cooperation, the Chair of German Linguistics is organizing a conference in cooperation with colleagues from Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The international research platform <http://puncspace.ur.de>, located at the Chair of German Linguistics of the UR, should also be seen and mentioned in connection with the conference, which is thematically closely related to it.

On the initiative of Prof. Paul Rössler, a new field of research has been established: comparative punctuation research. Although there have been individual works with comparative approaches to the study of punctuation, a contrastive punctuation research that integrates typological, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and didactic aspects is missing so far.

In the field of comparative punctuation research, we were able to give the discipline a name in the first place by publishing the results of a first conference in 2019 (*Interpunktions international. System – Norm – Praxis*) in a bilingual anthology in a renowned series at De Gruyter (*Linguistik – Impulse und Tendenzen*).

Published by De Gruyter and funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, the volume shows the dynamic development of punctuation research in recent years. It examines these inconspicuous non-alphabetic signs contrastively from different perspectives, thus establishing Comparative Punctuation as an independent linguistic research direction.

When viewed from the contrastive perspective, four areas are central: system, norm, use, acquisition. But also different approaches, for example working cross-linguistically, comparatively, or synchronically and diachronically, are of importance.

The upcoming conference in fall 2023 will take these aspects into account and focus on aspects such as:

- Concrete punctuation marks in single and several languages
- Punctuation principles and punctuation norms
- Extra- and intralinguistic influence on punctuation use
- Pragmatic use of punctuation marks
- Punctuation and reading competence
- Alternative and similar forms of punctuation
- Punctuation acquisition

The content-related objectives are very well captured in our call, which is attached here:

Background:

Most languages have a writing system that includes punctuation marks. Punctuation as a subsystem of written language has a different status in different languages and is not only used for the graphical structuring of texts, but can also fulfill syntactic, semantic or prosodic functions. The functions performed by individual punctuation marks, but also by the punctuation system as a whole, depend not only on the language in question and its typology, but also on the writing domain (e.g. school, authority, private sphere). Even though punctuation research is mainly conducted in the fields of writing acquisition, writing didactics, and codex research, it is also a topic of language typology research and comparative linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics, language attitudes and standard language research – or it should be. While approaches to comparative punctuation research are discernible in individual papers, contrastive punctuation research that includes language systems, sociolinguistic norms, and pragmatic practice is still a desideratum – and at the same time the goal of this conference.

Objectives:

The conference Punctuation Seen Internationally, which took place in Regensburg in May 2019, and the resulting volume *Vergleichende Interpunktion – Comparative Punctuation*, have already made a first contribution to shed light on punctuation across languages and from synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The repertoire of languages (which included Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Japonic, and Sino-Tibetan languages) is to be extended significantly, and explicitly also to non-alphabetic writing systems, in the conference in 2023. Ideally, the conference will bring about a typological comparison in terms of punctuation of the 20 largest languages in the world. However, contributions on smaller and often overlooked (minority) languages, whose writing and punctuation systems may have very unique regularities and dynamics due to less rigid language policies and linguistic standardization, are also very welcome.

Languages and Topics:

The conference will cover a wide range of topics in punctuation in international comparison. The aim is to have as typologically diverse a mix of languages as possible from different language families and with different writing systems (e.g. Chinese, Spanish, English, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Russian, Malay, French, German, Swahili, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Turkish, Tamil, Korean, Vietnamese, and others).

Contributions may focus on a single language or compare languages. They may focus on particular language domains, social groups, media, interaction with certain levels of language (like semantics, syntax, pragmatics), a synchronic or diachronic perspective etc. The following list of possible topics is primarily for inspiration and thus far from exclusive:

- inventory of punctuation marks and their function
- principles of punctuation: syntax, semantics, rhythm/prosody etc.
- punctuation systems in relation to the types of language (isolating, agglutinating, inflecting)
- punctuation systems in relation to the writing systems (logographic, syllabic, alphabetic)
- functions of punctuation as text marker, syntax marker or word marker

- functions of punctuation in relation to the producer and recipient perspective
- error tolerance and binding power of punctuation rules compared
- codification histories of punctuation systems
- punctuation reforms compared (successes/failures)
- explicit (= codified) and subsistent norms of punctuation
- language attitudes and language management with regard to punctuation
- metalinguistic discourse and language criticism on punctuation
- variation in punctuation (between regions, media, individuals, across the lifespan)
- ...

These points are intended to encourage contributions from the above areas of the various individual languages to be brought together and compared. Contributions on all languages that have a writing system and some form of punctuation are invited. Language of presentation: English; duration: presumably 30 minutes

For more information on the conference, please visit: <https://go.ur.de/compunc>