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# Prospective teachers' proficiency in punctuation rules and opinions related to punctuation problems

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## Abstract

In this study the students in education faculties that they have problems with their punctuation perspective of these issues to determine the underlying causes, and from there to the solution of problems with recommendations for action is intended to bring. To this end, students having written essays about two specific issues were examined punctuation and then the students in terms of proficiency in punctuation, most open-ended questions about problems they face are addressed. Student responses obtained from qualitative (content analysis) can be analyzed with data analysis are interpreted. According to the study results it is found out that while the vast majority of students in practice at most have problems whether the specific words will be written adjacent or apart, they identified during the open-ended questions the answers in majority of punctuation mistakes are made in “correction mark” and that the reason behind incorrect usage of punctuation can be traced back to “education concept”. However, students stress that they know the rules regarding punctuation but don't have the using habit.

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## 1. Introduction

Writing, are defined as certain expressions used to provide graphics (Rogers, 2004) or in writing or speech to be a result of all of the systems (Eker, 2003), past of the ages, tradition, science and technology, faith, religion and art to future generations of the final and without errors in a format to be transferred, so that the accumulation of human memory without losing data yielded (Köksal, 2003). This protective feature the same type of knowledge, skills and experiences help to prevent re-produce the old knowledge, skills and experience on the inclusion of new facilities is well known (Özbay, 2005). Writing, along with being the invention having the greatest impact on the change of human conscious, (Ong, 2003), after the first article of ideas necessarily were produced on script, (Platon) writings assigned the memory task and the memory has been designed to develop a tool attached to the brain and saving brain from the burden of storage is a prosthesis (Barthes, 2006) and making the writing more powerful (Rogers, 2004).

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Writing is important for the punctuation is principally concerned with reduction of uncertainty (Kirkman, 2006). Essential element of punctuation rules in written language and spoken language are of great importance in the article reflected. Incorrect use of punctuation rules causes both that the oral language is transferred incorrectly to written one and the language is not used correctly. Without punctuation marks, reading would be a very difficult task, as it should have been for the earliest readers. Most of the earliest written records appear to have had no spacing between words, no capitals, no indentation, and no punctuation marks (Alward and Alward, 1997). Memory of the oldest known, called the Orhon Turkish and in the first half of the 8th century constituted erected inscriptions (see Tekin, 2003). Used in these inscriptions, the only punctuation is a colon and the use of these marks more words, words to distinguish between groups and word of the bit is to show the location (Beyreli, Çetindağ and Celepoğlu, 2005).

According to Stubbs (1980), spoken words or ideas of things, by the spoken words are the words that mark, so speak and write a tight connection with each other is in the. Linguistics' main topic is the oral language (Kıran, 1996; Sönmez, 1990). Vendryes (2001) alleges that written language is weaker than the oral language. This is because the linguistics' explain that (Gökberk, 1980; Bobaroğlu, 1999; Baştürk, 2004) "To write a language, the language of self-alienation, life force is lost." According to Başkan (1988), although human language has a history of up to hundred of thousand years, writing is only a few thousand years. Contrast non-written languages are very easy to extinct (Günay, 2004) and it is believed that the language itself will corrupt easily when it is not written (Saussure, 1998).

According to Lyons (1983), a writing string no talk the important volume and stress changes can not be symbolized; different types of sentences in separate punctuation marks (eg, rather than an exclamation point or a question mark), and to highlight the word under the boots of the application if anything inadequate way to resolve this deficiency. The problem with poor punctuation is that it makes life difficult for the reader who needs to read what writer've written. That reader should not have to make allowances for writer's personal tastes in spelling and grammar (Trask, 1999). Unfortunately, the rules for punctuation are still not completely uniform. They change over time and according to location. Years ago writers placed their work far more than commas and semicolons in modern writers do. Also, punctuation sometimes varies depending on country or context. British and American writers follow different rules-and even use different names- for some punctuation marks. Scientists 'customs differ from Historians', and business has its own traditions (Woods, 2006). However, according to Imer (1990) in a text that punctuation is used properly, the impact of communication and conveyance of sentiment value is not on an underestimatable scale.

Symbols used in written language, the language of signs by means of expression is the only writing should be. There is no vowel, there is a language to be vocalized; receiver and transmitter is not at the same time face to face. Therefore, a special care is needed to be able understand what is told in literary language. It is needed to take into consideration all necessities of language and to use the words in such an appropriate order that won't give rise to confusion (Hatiboğlu, 1964; Ergin, 1972; Culler, 1982).

## 2. Method

The study group consists of the study in the 2007-2008 school year, Marmara University, Atatürk Faculty of Education total of 154 students, age 17-22, in the 1st class. Respondents had come to the university with high school and college preparatory information and were selected randomly as they know at least 1 language.

The data which is received from students (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2003) has been evaluated using content analysis method. As the evaluation unit; in essays incorrect punctuation, in open-ended questions, judicial sentence indicating that the phrase based on meaningful words were grounded on and the responses were coded accordingly. Similar or very small differences in expression indicating that states that the judiciary has the answers within the same encoding. After the encoding process is intended to regulation of the data obtained. Then about punctuation, punctuation mark for the opinions of each individual were evaluated under a theme.

## 3. Results (Findings)

In this section, which students most punctuation errors and these errors make their opinions about the reasons given to the place.

### a) Errors in Student Writing

Written by students in the writing of the Guidelines were examined from 17 punctuation marks have been identified in 10 they made a mistake. This most punctuation mistakes marks to minimize the frequency and percentage of are given below.

**Punctuation mistakes [Frequency, Percent (%)]** ; Some errors in spelling of the words (all, or, one in each, etc.) (150, 97%); Comma (82, 53%); Capitalization (41, 27%); Point (36, 23%); Apostrophe (30, 19%); Caret (23, 15%); Hyphen (17, 11%); Question mark (14, 9%); Two points (9, 6%); Semicolon (8, 5%).

### b) Punctuation mistakes

In this section, that most of students were asked to indicate the five punctuation errors. The aim of the prospective Teachers have their opinions on issues of Turkish punctuation is to be determined. Answers to questions in accordance with the data obtained most of the students to stand on the issues listed below from the decreasing.

1. 45% of students (69 students) were having problems with caret stated. Students at most of the revision marks in which words and syllables in words which can not decide to use were specified. First introduced at the age of punctuation marks, such as today's primary mission was not intended to write, the main purpose was to provide the right to speak (see Alpay, 2004).

2. 34% of students (52 students) were having problems with compound words stated. The 2005 Guidelines 20-28<sup>th</sup> pages are talking about the spelling of compound words. What words in use at the point of compound which words will be written separately, although manual guide than their predecessors as a coherent and comprehensive description of this issue even if the students are stuck in the available information and remained uncertain. These developments, the guide section of the directory is located close to one another as eading actor and pre-project to become involved in a different way of using students to write words that you separate or combined gave undecided.

3. 31% of students (47 students) were having problems with comma mark stated. Students expressed their overused comma mark. In general, after the conjunction or a punctuation mark to be used before you have knowledge of the problems caused not to be indicated. 2005 in the manual (p. 35) before and after the comma is being used in conjunction clearly indicated. This is more of use are thought to be from English into Turkish (see Hepçilingirler, 2006).

4. 25% of students (38 students) were having problems with some special words stated. Students alone, alone, matches, eyelashes, no, everything is not such words and for writing those words always remain in doubt stated. 2005 guide section of the rules (p. 24) some, few, several, some, many, many, no, none of the conventions such as the uncertainty adjectives and pronouns are written as a contiguous indicated.

5. 23% of students (36 students) were having problems with apostrophe stated. 46-48<sup>th</sup> in the 2005 guide. given information about the apostrophe in page. Topics included in detail in the manual but is a bit complicated. Developing guidance that the "of the Galata Bridge" and "Turkish Language and Literature Department of the Presidency" as examples of best use of each other, sign in distinguishing the cause of the preference is forcing students.

6. 23% of students (35 students) were having problems with question marks stated. Students question mark over a sentence which remains unstable at the point of putting stated. 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> of the 2005 guide pages related to this issue, although two description of this description questions can not give a complete answer.

7. 16% of students (24 students) were having problems with quotation marks stated. Quotation marks at the end of many issues related to the future of what marks by students has been expressed. 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> of the 2005 guide pages, "quoted in the quotation at the end of the mark (dot, question, exclamation marks, etc..) stays in quotation marks:" mental age is not the first. "proverb ..." in the form of an information net is located, but the sentence in quotes in the continuation of a word or series of does not come, so immediately after the quotation mark punctuation mark came and any related information is not coming.

8. 14% of students (21 students) were having problems with parentheses stated. Students placed a sign at the end of the sentence in parentheses did not know whether or not to be stated. 2005 as the separator guide last spring in this regard (p. 45) places a clear explanation was given: "Yay proper names in parentheses and the judicial capital letters indicating that expression begins and the appropriate end punctuation is brought."

9. 12% of students (19 students) were having problems with three-point mark stated. About three points that students were complaining of missing information. 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> of the 2005 guide pages, six different use of the mark clearly have revealed.

10. *Two points* about the line between the two lines, students begin to write a capital letter or small letter did not even stated they would start. 10% of students (16 students) were having problems with two points stated. 2005 in the manual (p. 41) between the two lines between words and phrases are used to distinguish between the two line description of the capitalized words will not start (p. 15) information with a clear answer to this question are given.

11. *The point* about *19.Nisan.1946* students give examples of misuse, such as 17<sup>th</sup> and based on false information reflected in the written language habits were noted. 10% of students (16 students) were having problems with the point stated. 32 of 2005 guides page, April 19, 1946 by giving examples of correct usage clearly indicated. However, 14 of the guide page, the 15<sup>th</sup>, 56<sup>th</sup>, XX., 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> usage correctly; 8<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, it is wrong to use that is specified.

### c) Reasons of punctuation mistakes

This section of the article accurately reflected spoken language, ie marked with the symbol used in the correct format, the underlying reason / reasons and comments were compiled in line with student opinions. These students can rest on the most reason to minimize the eight sub-headings under investigated.

1. Students use correct punctuation marks were connected with understanding the cause of education. Students in the teaching of written language, and indicate some lack of punctuation, the source of information that only the use of Turkish lessons and only validated by Turkish teachers to pay attention to punctuation as stated.

2. Punctuation as the second reason students do not care about the rules and a specified kind of self-evaluation were found. Substances is a problem with student-centered disregard for existing applications but inconsistencies and differences to the rules of language reduces trust. Barthes (2006) fast write request to use the written language prevent the signs indicate. This is because the author, as fast as thought to be at hand to demand bond.

3. The third reason as with magazines and books in television as a source of error is shown inaccuracies. Students, magazines, books and television about the error reported comments about the sloppy use of language. In 2000, an article written in 2005, this article reads punctuation is wrong for the reader. Developed in 2000 that was separate international word is being written in 2005 adjacent. Papers written in 2000 by a student studying in the year 2005 printed book or any punctuation error in the text will see many. Also, some programs on television recently, with sloppy use of language and correct as many errors were gained prevalence.

4. The fourth reason for the lack of information as shown. Students at university level is still missing information about the rules of punctuation to indicate an ongoing problem from elementary school at university level is an indicator of that is still unresolved.

5. Students and as a reason not to read the fifth book in the form of writing is not specified in the self-criticism have. One of the four basic language skills, oral reading of the language used in article reflecting on signs and symbols to learn provides read and write to the memory received the correct format as is applied activity. T

6. Habit took its place as the sixth reason. Habits may stem from problems with two reasons. First, instead of false information can not be maintained towards the second is to be false information (in the old guide is to this day because of wrong) instead of put the new method. For this reason, the experts sometimes even be described as wrong can exhibit some use. Indeed, old habits with new ones to change as each new guide is made mandatory. For this reason, the old habits are a major obstacle in the use of information.

7. Students reflected on the seventh cause written language to spoken language as people stated. Although written for Turkish as read, as read by writing and speaking in a language dense, there are important differences between languages. First of all, the presence of two languages is not the same word.

8. Has taken its place as the eighth cause of foreign words. Loans to foreign words eastern origin, Arabic and Persian than it can be like western origin, English and French from the words as the two are separated and the languages of Turkish only word-level change was not due at the same time Turkey punctuation rules on the most influential is (take a stage = stage to receive) and is. This indicates the students' mind-bending as they led to the emergence of the use is.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

When the texts that Students wrote were examined, it was confirmed that they made 10 punctuation mistakes from the punctuation rules in the 2005 Guidelines. In open-ended questions, students said they have difficulty to implement 11 of these rules. It was defined that there are some differences between those mistakes that they make in practice and the ones they believe they do. Accordingly, while students state they make mistakes in combined words, quotation marks, two lines, parentheses, in the texts they have written such mistakes are not came across. However, there are mistakes in capitalization, colon, hyphen and semicolon in which they think they don't make mistake. In the 1928 Revolution Turkish has been started to be written Latin letters instead of Arabic scripts. Within 90 years this process has completed the transition Turkish on many issues and many problems have been solved. However, some issues are still not resolved. According to Bloomfield (1983), the text string changes, no matter what type of emergency so the language can not affect the representation. A new post in a community string being used widely is the change in timing can lead to some minor language changes. This effect process is still not complete today. At this point the problems of Turkish language, written language, students (university students) were detected with the eye and solutions to these problems of Turkish latest Guidelines (2005) was examined with the help.

As a result of research in the field of Turkish Language and spelling and punctuation have been identified many issues still be resolved. Students use about 11 different punctuation problems that were expressed. This result is also compatible with Yıldız (2002) 's research.

Students to write correctly in Turkish the only information was not sufficient. Students ie punctuation rules correctly, students know they can transfer from "how people stated can not use. The solution was the first learned to write while that of spoken language into written language when they use symbols to use signs by which knowledge is possible when given because the punctuation is a habit, and is acquired at an early age. In addition to these problems still unresolved because of the students' habits and other communications provided in a format that can be observed that was based on.

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