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Call for Papers

Conference, 22nd–24th September 2023
Comparative Punctuation Worldwide

Regensburg
(within the framework of MISTI (MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives))

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 <u>Punctuation Seen Internationally</u>, which took place in Regensburg in May 2019, and the resulting volume <u>Vergleichende Interpunktion – Comparative Punctuation</u>, 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

Please send your abstract (with title, max. 2500 characters) by **31st January 2023** to: **compunc.worldwide@ur.de**

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