

# BBN-ANG-183 Typography

## Lecture 7: Punctuation

Zoltán Kiss & Péter Szigetvári

Dept of English Linguistics, Eötvös Loránd University

# outline

where punctuation begins

punctuation marks

- sentence- and clause-final punctuation

- horizontal lines

- paired symbols

  - brackets

  - quotation marks

- other punctuation marks

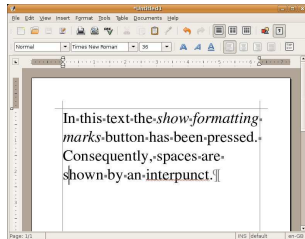
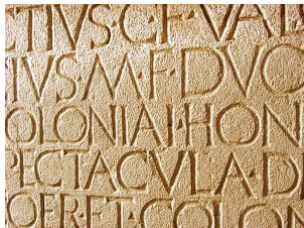
order of punctuation marks

## the first punctuation mark

### in the beginning

there were only uppercase letters (not even interword spaces): *scriptio continua*, typical of ancient Greek texts

THISISWHATTHISKINDOFTEXTLOOKSLIKE  
ITISNOTVERYEASILYREADABLEBUT  
BETTERTHANNOHINGINTERWORDSPACES  
AREINDISPENSABLEFORFASTREADING



### the first punctuation mark: the interpunct

the Romans used raised dots (or triangles) between words (many word processors represent space this way when showing formatting characters)

## sentence-final punctuation

### full stop/period

- ▶ ends sentences
- ▶ ends abbreviations
- ▶ separates “words” in email addresses and URLs
- ▶ separates decimal fractions in numerals (Anglo-Saxon convention)
- ▶ separates thousands, millions etc. in numerals (continental convention)



### exclamation mark/point (screamer, bang)

- ▶ derives from Latin *io* ‘hey’:  $\text{io} \rightarrow !$
- ▶ ends sentences
- ▶ within a sentence it is usually in parentheses: She has seven(!) cats.
- ▶ also used as a negation symbol:  $! =$  means ‘is not equivalent to’



## sentence-final punctuation

### question mark (interrogation point, eroteme)

- ▶ derives from Latin *Quæstio* 'question':  $Qo \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow ?$
- ▶ typically sentence final, but also within sentences:  
Where do we come from? where do we go? and why?



### Spanish and Catalan

have sentence initial inverted exclamation and question marks:  
¿Qué hora es? ¡Olé!

### emphasis

may be achieved by tripling exclamation and question marks:  
Excellent!!! You really mean it???

don't use more than three exclamation or question marks, and use this effect with care, it may annoy the reader and easily gets inflated

## clause-final punctuation

### comma

- ▶ ends clauses
- ▶ separates the items of lists
- ▶ separates decimal fractions in numerals (continental convention)
- ▶ separates thousands, millions etc. in numerals (Anglo-Saxon convention), e.g., 100,000.00 vs. 100.000,00 (=one hundred thousand)



### lists

- ▶ in lists of two items there is no comma before the conjunction:  
X and Y; X or Y
- ▶ in lists of more than two items there are two conventions:
  - ▶ X, Y and Z
  - ▶ X, Y, and Z

the orange comma is the serial comma

## serial (Oxford, or Harvard) comma

### ambiguity

- ▶ “I love my parents, Lady Gaga and Humpty Dumpty.”
- ▶ “I love my parents, Lady Gaga, and Humpty Dumpty.”
- ▶ so are LG and HD my parents?
- ▶ “I love my mother, Lady Gaga and Humpty Dumpty.”
- ▶ “I love my mother, Lady Gaga, and Humpty Dumpty.”
- ▶ so is LG my mother?

cf. <http://www.nyest.hu/hirek/vesszoparipa>

## clause-final punctuation

### semicolon

- ▶ is a “stronger” type of comma, linking related sentences:

I am alone; my wife left me.



- ▶ used in lists with items containing commas:

I traveled to London, England; Tijuana, Mexico; and Reykjavík, Iceland.

Lisa scored 2,845,770 points; Marcia, 2,312,860; and Jeff, 1,726,640.

the orange semicolons above are “serial semicolons”

### colon

- ▶ precedes a clarification of what has been said before
- ▶ separates hours and minutes (and seconds) in time specifications: The time now is 10:48:42.
- ▶ separates the title and the subtitle in a reference list:  
Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope





## spacing

general rule for spaces around sentence- and clause-final punctuation

no space before, space after (think of where the line may be broken)

## departures

- ▶ it is an old-fashioned convention to leave a larger space between sentences, i.e., after a sentence-ending (not abbreviation-ending) period, exclamation mark, question mark (and possibly also after a colon); most present-day authorities discourage this practice
- ▶ it is a French convention to leave a thin space **before** an exclamation mark, question mark, colon, and semicolon; beware: this must be a nonbreaking space!

both of these conventions are referred to as French spacing

# French spacing

## space between sentences larger than between words

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nunc iaculis ullamcorper arcu. Sed feugiat arcu. Fusce ultrices malesuada diam. Suspendisse erat orci, viverra ut, scelerisque scelerisque, aliquam viverra, est. Ut feugiat, velit vitae pulvinar ultrices, justo orci vestibulum ipsum, ut pulvinar nulla mauris nec libero. Nullam nibh mauris, pulvinar nec, ultrices et, ultricies eu, justo. Integer tempor, nulla volutpat porttitor rutrum, nibh tortor dictum nulla, at euismod lorem nunc eu urna. Cras nec est vel leo placerat ultricies. Vivamus venenatis nisl vitae libero. Suspendisse blandit justo eu nibh.

## space between sentences same as between words

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nunc iaculis ullamcorper arcu. Sed feugiat arcu. Fusce ultrices malesuada diam. Suspendisse erat orci, viverra ut, scelerisque scelerisque, aliquam viverra, est. Ut feugiat, velit vitae pulvinar ultrices, justo orci vestibulum ipsum, ut pulvinar nulla mauris nec libero. Nullam nibh mauris, pulvinar nec, ultrices et, ultricies eu, justo. Integer tempor, nulla volutpat porttitor rutrum, nibh tortor dictum nulla, at euismod lorem nunc eu urna. Cras nec est vel leo placerat ultricies. Vivamus venenatis nisl vitae libero. Suspendisse blandit justo eu nibh.

## French spacing

the text below is from a Hungarian publication of 1975 (Tersánszky J. Jenő, *Misi Mókus kalandjai*, Móra), illustrating French spacing: thin space before “!”, “?”, “:”, “;”

Hát a növendékek közül Maki Mókusra rájött a csintalankodhatnék. Különben jó tanuló volt és ügyes. Ő volt a tornajátékok vezetője. Most azonban így ferdítette el a tanvers végét:

*Abány magot találsz a fán,  
Rakd a bendődbe, mókuskám!*

Úgy ám! De a tanító rögtön meghallotta ezt.

– Mit mondtál, te haszontalan? Nem szégyelled magad? Jó tanuló voltál eddig és játékvezető, mégis ilyen rossz példával szolgálsz társaidnak? Kitől tanultad ezt?

## French spacing

this text is from a French book: Georges Mounin, *Clefs pour la linguistique*, Seghers, 1968; the spaces before colons and question marks is even greater


quemenent à partir de ses usages dans la langue. ~~Il~~  
aboutissent-ils à une procédure d'extraction de la  
signification dont Meillet a parfaitement énoncé la  
théorie dans la formule suivante : « Le sens d'un  
mot ne se laisse définir que par une moyenne entre  
les emplois linguistiques d'une part et les individus  
et les groupes d'une même société d'autre part. »  
*C'est la **théorie contextuelle** de la signification. Un  
mot, dit-on, n'a aucun sens hors des contextes où  
il apparaît : que signifie le mot « mouche » isolé ?  
que signifie l'énoncé « Le boulanger fait des bâ-  
tards », surtout si on le sépare de la chanson de  
Jacques Dutronc *Paris s'éveille* ? Les mots qui n'ap-  
paraissent qu'une fois dans la somme des documents  
dont on dispose sur un état de langue — ce sont  
les *hapax* — sont la plupart du temps impossibles*

## the hyphen (or dash)

has two main functions: separating (orthographical) syllables and linking words

### end-of-line syllabification

a hyphen is typically applied to break words

an old-fashioned alternative glyph:  this may be used as an end-of-line hyphen in hyphen-linked words

### linking words

- ▶ e.g., twentieth-century writers
- ▶ suspended (or hanging, or dangling) hyphen: nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers

## dashes

typewriters and ASCII had a limited range of keys/codes: many symbols are omitted or merged; as a result, many users see no difference between a hyphen, a minus sign, an en-dash, or an em-dash

### the minus sign

is used to indicate negative numbers ( $0^{\circ}\text{K} \approx -273^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), and subtraction ( $7 - 3 = 4$ ); it is longer than the hyphen: exactly as large as the horizontal bar of the plus sign, “+” (HTML: `&minus;`)

### en-dash

the en-dash typically represents ranges (pp. 13–28, 15:30–17:00); its width is 1 en (half an em), usually thinner than the minus sign (HTML: `&ndash;`)

### em-dash

the em-dash usually delimits parenthetical material (Looking after cats — a noble task — needs patience.); its width is 1 em (HTML: `&mdash;`)

## dashes

### some typographers do not use separate glyphs

for an en- and an em-dash, but distinguish them by surrounding the latter by spaces:

They read pages 13–28 in the book – which turned out to be important.  
or They read pages 13—28 in the book — which ...

### spacing

only em-dashes may have a space following them

### replacement

if unavailable, the en-dash is usually replaced by two hyphens (pp. 13--28), the em-dash by three (book---which)

## dashes

- ✗ It was very cold, -14°C.
- ✓ It was very cold, −14°C.
- ✗  $\sqrt{-1}$  is an imaginary number.
- ✓  $\sqrt{-1}$  is an imaginary number.
- ✗ Delete rows 5-8.
- ✓ Delete rows 5–8.
- ✓ Very low temperatures (−200—−100°C) are lethal.  
(but quite ugly)



# brackets

## types

(parentheses)	or round/curved/oval brackets, parens, fingernails
[brackets]	or box brackets, square brackets
{braces}	or curly brackets
⟨angle brackets⟩	or chevrons

## embedding

when brackets are embedded (that is, when they are enclosed within each other another pair of brackets [viz. square brackets {braces within those}]), **may** be used within round brackets, however, it is more usual to use the same parentheses (round (or curved (or oval)) brackets); whichever you choose, be consistent

## embedding in mathematical formulas

$$\left( \left( 5 - (13 \div 4) \right) * 7 - 2 \right) \div 3$$

## brackets

## use

besides embedded parentheticals

- ▶ square brackets are used for
  - ▶ explanatory or missing material (especially in quotes) (“I [...] don’t see it [the cat].”)
  - ▶ narrow, phonetic transcription
  - ▶ deleted letters in classical philology (“cum Cæsar[e] venit”)
- ▶ braces are used for
  - ▶ sets (“ $\mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ ”)
  - ▶ disjunctive choices (“ $r \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ \{C, \#\}$ ”)
- ▶ angle brackets are used for
  - ▶ spelt forms (the word bæ: may be spelt ⟨bare⟩ or ⟨bear⟩)
  - ▶ inserted letters in classical philology (cum C⟨æ⟩sare venit)
- ▶ primary school teachers have a bad habit of encouraging pupils to enclose letters/words to be ignored (deleted) in parentheses; such text should rather simply be ~~rubbed out~~ crossed out

# brackets

## replacement

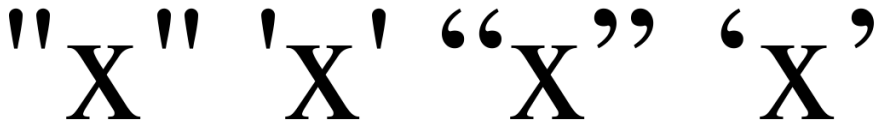
- ▶ avoid replacing parentheses by slashes /like this/ (only for broad, phonemic transcriptions!)
- ▶ angle brackets are sometimes rendered as less-than and greater-than signs <like this>, a symptom of poor typography; ⟨this is right!⟩

## spacing

there is a space before an opening and after a closing bracket (unless the latter is followed by some punctuation mark), there is no space after an opening and before a closing bracket; this is especially important when they are replaced /e.g., like here/

## undirected and directed quotes

typewriters and ASCII have one symbol for opening and closing quotation marks: these are called undirected (or dumb) quotes (ASCII 96, the backtick, is not the mirrored version of the single quote)



The image displays four pairs of quotation marks, each pair followed by the letter 'X'. From left to right: 1. Undirected double quotes: two identical double quote characters. 2. Undirected single quotes: two identical single quote characters. 3. Directed double quotes: a left double quote followed by a right double quote. 4. Directed single quotes: a left single quote followed by a right single quote.

undirected double quotes

undirected single quotes

directed double quotes

directed single quotes

many word processors automatically change undirected quotes to directed quotes (this feature is called “smart quotes”, and can usually be set somewhere like [Tools > AutoCorrect > Custom Quotes])

since the “right” direction is calculated from the previous character, wrong results may emerge, e.g., in the '80s → in the ‘80s

⇒ be careful with smart quotes!

## quotation mark shapes

the glyphs of quotation marks are the most language-specific of all punctuation marks: here are a few examples

British	‘one’	“two”
American	“one”	‘two’
Hungarian	„egy”	»kettő«
German	„eins“	,zwei‘
French	« un »	« deux » (called guillemets)
Dutch	«een»	<twe>
Finnish/Swedish	”yksi”	»kaksi»

- ▶ French leaves a thin space after an opening and before a closing guillemet
- ▶ in Hungarian text use the Hungarian glyphs, even when quoting an English phrase: vigyázzunk a „smart quote”-ok használatával!

## embedding quotation marks

quotations within quotations are normally enclosed by a different set of quotation marks, e.g.,

- ▶ “HAL said, ‘Good morning, Dave,’” recalled Frank.
- ▶ ‘HAL said, “Good morning, Dave,”’ recalled Frank.
- ▶ „»Jó reggelt, Dave« mondta Hal” emlékezett Frank.



the use of double quotes as primary quotation marks is a better choice, because they are more readily distinguishable from other punctuation marks than single quotes

## other punctuation marks

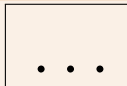
### apostrophe (/fi:/)

- ▶ used for genitives (Bob's), omission (can't, in the '60s)
- ▶ not to be confused with the prime mark: ' ≠ '
- ▶ the glyph is usually the same as that of the closing single quote mark



### ellipsis

in good typesetting systems the three dots of ellipsis are a special glyph: these dots are further apart from each other than three full stops (... ≠ ...) (except in a monospace font!)



### slash (or oblique, virgule, slant, diagonal separatrix)

- ▶ indicates a disjunction (“and/or”)
- ▶ features in abbreviations (w/o = without, c/o = care of)
- ▶ indicates a joint between words (“the Jones/Gimson transcription”)



# order of punctuation marks

## principles

- ▶ principle of logic: nest punctuation properly (i.e., close first what has been opened most recently)
- ▶ principle of esthetics: do not leave the baseline empty

## conflicts

- ▶ quoting part of a sentence: both orders occur
  - ▶ logical order: *They talked about “new data”.*
  - ▶ esthetic order: *They talked about “new data.”*
- ▶ footnote references, punctuation and closing paren: go for the esthetic order
  - They talked about new data.<sup>12</sup>*
  - They talked about new data (on quasars).*
  - (They talked about new data.)*