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English Punctuation Marks

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Abstract: ***Punctuation is a visible device with different shapes contrived to present written texts in a form that is both understandable and easy to read. Punctuation in English is a group of marks that guide the reader through his eyes to the main units in the text like the phrase, the sentence, or the paragraph. It also shows him the kind of connection between them, so that meaning will be arrived at without delay or confusion. The current study investigates English Punctuation Marks: importance, purposes, and types. Moreover, each mark has been explained to understand its usage. (Punctuation Marks,their Importance, their Purposes, their Uses, and Classification).***

Keywords: Punctuation Marks, Importance, Purposes, Uses, and Classification

1. Introduction

Punct. (punctuation) has a significance role in English texts. English punct. marks are frequently given a separate section in grammar books. They will be investigated thoroughly by separate subsections. Among the most common punct. marks are *the full stop, the comma, the colon, the semicolon, and the q.m.*(question mark).They play an important role in marking off sentences, clauses, phrases, and separate items. They, further, play a grammatical role in indicating the type of relationship between clauses. By dividing the text into units based on meaning, punct. in English facilitates reading and understanding. Similarly, by setting off the grammatical or logical units, punct. marks help the reader's mind (through his eyes) to distinguish these units and the relations holding between them. The aim of this study is to highlight the significance of punct. in English language, and its effect on meaning.

2. English Punctuation and Its Importance

Punct.is visual devices whose role is to help the reader to communicate grammatical and other distinctions in written English (Quirk et al., 1985: 1610).

Brittain (1950) in his "Note to the Reader" considers punct. a powerful device that the writer can use to express his own thought exactly.

Basically, as Kane (1983:609) suggests, all punct. exist to help readers understand what the writer wishes to say.

Quirk (1968:239) emphasizes that the reader should be with all the help he needs from the resources of punct.to avoid any difficulty that may arise from the message.

The originator of the written message is not usually present to clear up any difficult (Quirk et al.,1985:1611). Moreover, there is no direct, face-to- face confrontation of the writer and the reader in the typical situation in which the written language is used (Lyons, 1968:40). As a result, information must be conveyed, in writing, by punct.

Brittain (1950:4) argues that the reader "cannot get along at all withoutpunct." Brittain may be exaggerating in saying that the reader cannot get along at all without punct., but at the same time he refers to the importance of punct.which saves the reader time and effort in searching for the intended meaning. Each sentence has a thought to express, each paragraph has an idea to convey; yet without distinguishing the sentences or paragraphs in the text the reader cannot grasp the message behind that text.

Halliday (1985:1-2) considers punct.and spacing as "structure signals" of the written language that show how the substance of writing is organized.

The writers, however, who do not point to spaces, like Carey (1960) and Partridge (1964), say that the reader can get along in reading but he may go astray and lose the intended meaning.

Partridge (1964:8) states that punct.often ranks as an adjunct, or, in fact, as a component; for it is part of the structure up to the point that without it the structure would be meaningless – except after an exhausting examination.

Fowler (cited in Gowers, 1973:236) believes that marks of punct.are to be regarded as devices, not of saving the writer the trouble of putting his words in the order that naturally has a meaning, but for saving the reader the moment or two that would sometimes, without them, be necessarily spent on reading the sentence twice over.

Punct. imposes the impression of completeness and independence on units marked off as sentences, and helps to show connection between units grouped without sentence limits (Quirk et al., 1985:1624).

In other words, punct. should be consistent and should denote the quality of connection between sentences (Graves and Hodge,1947:94). On the contrary,"zero punctuation denotes the chain of dependence", Nash (1986:124) remarks.

Partridge (1964:183) compares a person who fails to make use of the storehouse of punct., whose instruments clarify and simplify, variegate and enliven, refine and subtilize, to a fellow who badly needs spectacles and stubbornly refuses to wear them.

Another point that shows the importance of punct.is that of all the material written and printed only a small fraction is read aloud (Carey,1960: 3-4). Emphasizing the role of eyes, Carey (ibid.:4) says that effective punct. can convey the

meaning of the written language to the reader's mind through his eyes without delay and without ambiguity .

Vallins (1951: 101) refers to the role of eyes when he says that marks of punct. outline the pattern and nature of the sentence for the reader, who arrives at the meaning and significance through the eye.

Quirk et al. (1985: 1445) agree with Carey that many types of texts take shape first on paper and have their normal realization in graphic form before the phonetic one. For that reason they conclude that punct. has "a greater interest for the study of texts than for linguistics as a whole"(ibid.).

An interesting analogy that is suggested by Olson (1999:1) in “Punctuation Made Simple” illustrates the previous words by comparing punct. marks to the traffic signs whose rules help to make driving safe and efficient.

In summing up the importance of punct., Carey (1960: 12) states that it is needed for an immediate grasp of the sense in order to avoid any possible ambiguity, or occasionally to relieve a very lengthy passage. Partridge (1964:184) adds that good punct. not only prevents ambiguity and confusion but soothes the path of the reader as well.

3. Purposes of Punctuation

Carey (1960) gives two purposes for punct., yet he prefers the second. The first one (ibid.:3) is to indicate the pause or breathing spaces appropriate in reading, with the possibility of reading aloud never quite lost sight of. The second (ibid.:4), which is the main function of it, is to make perfectly clear the construction of the written words. He remarks that with the fulfillment of the second function “all risk of ambiguity will be avoided and the appropriate pauses will be indicated to the reader,” when they are not so optional as to be left to the reader to supply. For illustration, the following is given as an example (ibid.:4):

The whole country and the British Commonwealth, followed the visit of the king and Queen to France last week, and that visit must have left on those Whowere privileged toaccompany their Majesties, an impression that will not easily be forgotten.

In the above example, commas are inserted where a slight pause might be made, or breath taken, if the words are read aloud. The second comma is used as an aid to the eye as well as an indicator of a pause for the voice. The last comma is the most common incorrect use of this mark because of the length of the clause ‘on those Who …Majesties’ which is the indirect object of the verb *left* (ibid.:5).

Carey (ibid.:6) confirms that the insertion of the stops should be governed more by the construction of the sentence than by its mere length. Three centuries ago the above sentence might have been punctuated exactly as seen in it, but so far as the construction of the sentence is concerned, no stop (internal punct. mark) is needed (ibid.:5).

In the late sixteenth century there were two schools of thought that dealt with the theory and practice of punct. (***Encyclopaedia Britannica,*** 1974 s.v. *Punctuation:*15:275). The first of them was the elocutionary school, which followed the late medieval practice, treated point or stops as indications of pauses of various lengths that might be observed by a reader particularly when reading aloud (ibid.). The syntactical school, which won the argument by the end of the seventeen century, saw stops as guides to the grammatical construction of sentences (ibid.).

Accordingly, the old stopping was to guide the voice in reading aloud, while the modern is mainly to guide the mind in seeing through the grammatical construction (Fowler and Fowler, 1906 cited in Partridge, 1964:5).

Partridge (ibid.:6) calls the schools as the two systems of punct.: the rhetorical or dramatical or elocutionary, and "the grammatical or constructional or logical, which has always predominated in prose and has predominated in verse since ca. 1660". Then he adds that the dramatic and grammatical systems coincide when the speaker wants to write a dialogue; for example (ibid.:7):

He speaks often of freedom. But, he takes good care to avoid going to prison for the case of freedom.

Regarding the constructional pointing (punctuating), it may beurged that in reality it rests on sense and meaning, since grammar is the analysis of the forms in which rational expression is made (ibid.:4).

Marks of punct.help readers to understand the written language by signaling the grammatical or logical structure of a sentence (Kane, 1983:609). Kane mentions two other minor purposes of punct.The first is to stress an important word or phrase, as shown in the following example:

In 1291, with the capture of the last great stronghold, Acre, the Moslems had regained all their possessions, and the great crusades ended, *in failure*(Morris Bishop, cited in Kane,1983:609).

Here the purpose of using the last comma is emphatic, i.e. to isolate and thus stress the phrase (ibid.). The second purpose he mentions is to mark rhythm, as in: *For he gave himself to his army, and to his country, and to hisGod* (W. k. Fleming, cited in Kane,1983:609).

Kane (ibid.: 610) ends his illustration by saying that these three functions of punct.often overlap, for any time the writer puts a comma into a sentence he helps readers to follow its grammar and automatically to affect emphasis and rhythm.

Commenting on the relationship between punct.and the prosodic features of the spoken language especially pauses; Quirk et al. (1985: 1611) say that it is not a simple or systematic matter to establish a link between them. They add that any attempt to relate punct.directly to pauses, for instance, is misguided (ibid.: 1611) ,as in the first example of Carey above.

Kane (1983:611) points out that the stops (the period, the q.m., the ex.m. (exclamation mark), the colon, the semicolon, the comma, and the dash) take this name from the fact that they correspond, only loosely, to pauses and intonation in speech.

Halliday (1976:325), however, states that in written English punct.can show information structure, but not fully. He adds that most punct.practice combines information structure (punctuating according to the intonation) with sentence structure (punctuating according to the grammar) (ibid.).

Quirk et al. (1985:1610) distinguish two purposes of punct.marks, viz. separation and specification. Separation is in turn divided in to separation of successive units and separation of included units. They add that the punct.mark specifies a grammatical, semantic, or even a pragmatic function (ibid.:1611). Consider these examples:

(a) I've just had some good news: I've been offered a job in a law firm.
(b) Aren't they tall!

In the first example the colon distinguishes two independent sentences; hence, it is related to grammar. At the same time it distinguishes semantically between two connected meanings, i.e. semantic relation. In the second example an ex.m.is used, for pragmatic reasons, instead of a question mark despite the interrogative form of the sentence (Quirk et al., 1985:1639n.).

Moreover, it can be said that punct.is related to style, or one of its minor function is to show a style of writing. Carey (1960:22) gives the following example:
When the talkies came into existence ten years ago there were very few forms of popular entertainment to dispute their authority. They were new. They were exciting. They introduced fresh and stimulating personalities to the public. …

Afterwards he comments by saying that this style of writing, if pursued for a page or more, would of course become tiresome; but he admits that a series of short, sharp sentences can be effective in the proper place (ibid.). Thus, "punctuation is one of the handmaids of style, menial perhaps, yet capable of helping a mannerism to attract or to irritate."(Ibid.:115)

In talking about punctuating a sentence or a paragraph, Quirk et al. (1985) relate that to the style of writing. They say:

The decision to coordinate several independent clauses within one sentence or to separate them as different sentences, with or without formal sign of their logical connection, is dependent largely upon the style of material one is handling or indeed upon the personal preference of the writer (ibid.:1624).

Kane (1983:611) says that commas, semicolons, and the other marks are an intimate part of grammar and style. Nash (1986:101) even points out that there are styles of punct.:a "semi-colon style" and a "comma style" which are related to the articulation and phrasing of a passage.

Thus, punct.forms an integral part of composition and an invaluable assistance to the public expression and perhaps even the private formulation of lucid thinking (Partridge, 1964:8). As punct.is related to style, so it is part of writing, to use Roberts (1956:214) expression.

Some writers even consider punct.*an art* by itself. Murray (1794 cited in Partridge, 1964:4) points out that "punctuation is the art of dividing a written composition into sentences, or parts of sentences, by points or stops".

Beadnell (1880 cited in Partridge, 1964:5) states that when the compositor wants to write, none proves a stumbling-block or a matter of uncertainty of all subjects as the art of punct., owing that to its inexact nature.

Partridge (1964:183) regards punct. as an art and craft as well, preferring it to be an art because it forms a means to an end and is not an end in itself. He adds that the purpose it serves, the art it sub-serves, is the art of good writing (ibid.). He goes on to say that if a writer's punct. is haphazard and mechanical, it positively misleads and irritates and fails to please (ibid.).

As each kind of art depends on the artist himself, so punct.depends mainly on the writer himself and his skill in this art.

4. Punctuation Marks: Conventions, Options, or Rules?

Punct.marks do not appear suddenly. Brittain (1950:1) argues that they are not something created before the world and enduring no change to all time. They are social inventions of man, and have undergone changes (ibid.). He considers a mark of punct.a conventional symbol used to convey to the reader a meaning not explicitly communicated by the word-symbols in the sentence (ibid:3). This opinion is shared by Vallins (1951:102), who says that punct.is a convention, and that it is meant just for the convenience of the reader. Thus, there is a socially recognized meaning for each mark (Brittain,1950:44).

Olson (1999:1) states that punct.has rules but they are not static. He justifies that by the fact that the writers' meanings change over time. He concludes that such shifts occur “in consensus”, and that brings the reader to conventions a second time.

This is shown in the words of Gowers (1973:239 n.) when he says that fashion in punct.changes much more slowly than fashion in the use of language.Roberts (1956:216) says that "punctuation has changed since 1700 but slowly and in a more or less uniform way."

Quirk et al. (1985:1611) point out that punct. marks tend to be used according to fairly strict convention and even in the peripheral areas, and each individual publishing house imposes one for all materials that it puts for printing.

Professional writer for the most part follow conventional practices, but they from now and then diverge intentionally from the norm in order to achieve calculated effects (Roberts, 1962:101). Roberts adds that one may study rules of punct.if he is conscientious, or one may memorize as many of them as possible, and yet he does not try to understand them (ibid.). He gives the reason behind that in saying that some rules of punct. are arbitrary and meaningless, and writers punctuate in such away simply because it is conventional or fashionable to do it in that way (ibid.:167).

Roberts' denial of the understandability of punct. rules is unacceptable; for punct. itself depends on grammar, logic, and meaning, as it is illustrated in the previous section. What he suggests, however, can be seen in a few points concerning the hyphen, for example. Quirk et al. (1985:1614) refer to this point in saying that there is an element of arbitrariness in punct. especially in the use of the hyphen.

Carey (1960:1) affirms the necessity of laying down 'a law' in using punct., and states some personal views on pertinent general principles. He even says that rules governing punct. are much more than a matter of personal taste: "I should define punct. as being governed two-thirds by rule and one-third by personal taste." (Ibid.)

Kane (1983:610) concludes that punct. depends mainly on what the writer wants to do; in fact, it is a mixed bag of absolute rules, general convention, and individual options. To punctuate effectively the writer must learn when rules are absolute, when conventions allow him options, and when he indulges in individuality without misleading the reader (ibid.).

There are three basic grounds on which punct., or rather their uses, stands. Partridge (1964: 7) compares them to the three main personalities in any country:

Grammar represent parliament, … logic represents King or President : but the greatest power of all is vested in the people or, rather in the more intelligent people – in good sense rather than in mere commonsense.

He gives the reason for that in stating that good sense or wisdom can and sometimes does produce a punct.that is much superior to the barely adequate, i.e. commonsense (ibid.).

5. Classification of Punctuation Marks (Stops or Points)

Punct. is derived from the Latin word *punctus*, which means 'point'; in fact, from the fifteenth century to the early eighteenth century the subject was known in English as 'pointing' (***Encyclopaedia Britannica,*** 1973 s.v. *Punctuation*: 15:275)

There are a number of ways in which punct.marks are classified. Carey's (1960) punct.system consists of heavier stops (full stop, colon, semicolon), lighter stops (comma, brackets, dash), and a mixed bag (ex.m. and q.m., inverted commas, hyphens, capitals, italics, paragraphs). This system is also found in Kane (1983:611), but he calls the marks (? ! : ; , and –) stops.

Partridge (1964:x), on the other hand, classifies punct.marks into true stops and minor stops. The first group consists of the full stop, the comma, the semicolon, the colon, the dash, and the parentheses, whereas the second consists of the q.m. and the ex.m., as they are mere indications of tone.

The writers who deal with punct.marks try to classify them according to their position in a sentence, or their relatedness to structure, or the function of punct.itself, i.e. syntactically or semantically, or according to their importance.

Brittain (1950) classifies them according to their position in the sentence, i.e. beginning and end punct., the five principal interior marks (single comma, pair of commas, comma plus coordinating conjunction, semicolon, and colon), and other marks.

The classification of Carey, for example, depends on the importance of punct. Yet, he (1960:13) says that he finds it difficult to subdivide his subject in an orderly and compact manner, since each mark may trespass on another's ground. Thus, he tries to achieve compromise by dividing stops into heavier and lighter stops according to the length of the pause they indicate (ibid.)

Quirk et al. (1985) classify punct.marks according to their function as well as their relatedness to the structure of the sentence. The first one is mentioned briefly in (2.2.above). They mention two main functions of punct., separation and specification. Separation is applied either to successive units (e.g. a space separates two successive words, or a period followed by a space separates two successive sentences), or to included units, in which case the marks are called correlatives, and they are to indicate the beginning and the end of an included unit; e.g. the commas mark off the parenthetic clause as in *He is, I think, a teacher* (ibid.:1610).

The second function is specification such as the apostrophe in *the reader's*, and this specifies the ending as genitive in contrast to the phonologically identical plural ending in *the readers* (ibid.:1611).

The classification by their relatedness to the structure or hierarchy of punct., as Quirk et al. (1985 :1611) call it, begins from the word and moving down to the paragraph:
unseparated letters (a word),
hyphen, (-),
word-space (a space between words),
comma (,),
colon (:),
semicolon (;),
period (full stop) (.), and
paragraph.

The above-mentioned punct.marks have a separating function (ibid.:1612). They add that there are other marks, those that have a specifying function, in addition to separating, on the same level of the period that are the q.m. (?) and the ex.m. (!), and the dash that fits uneasily into the

hierarchy, perhaps between the comma and the colon (ibid.). As for parenthesis and the other types of bracketing, they leave them outside the hierarchy because their function is to represent a sharp interruption (ibid.).

Nash (1986:109) also classifies them depending on their function, to illustrate that he, rather semantically, deals with marks of punct. fewer than three heads: (a) stops or marks of separation, (b) suspension, i.e. marks of interruption, apposition, or citation, and (c) scorings or marks of expression.

Before starting the detailed treatment of each punct.mark alone, two writing devices need to be mentioned here, since some writers list them with punct.marks and others consider them **related to** punct., though not belonging to it. Those devices are *spacing* and *capitalization.*

Lyons (1968:170) states that words are separated from one another by spaces, and sentences are separated from one another by using special punct.marks, as well as by capitalizing the first letter of the first word in each sentence.

Halliday (1985:1) mentions spaces with punct.and calls them "structure signal". There are narrow spaces that separate letters, wider spaces that separate words, and still wider spaces, with accompanying full stop, that separate sentences; thus, according to Halliday, the additional function of spaces is to mark off units (letters, words, and sentences)(ibid.).

Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973, s.v. *Punctuation:*15:274) defines punct.as "the use of spacing, conventional signs, and certain typographical devices as aids to the understanding and correct reading". Spaces are firstly used to mark sentences, and an enlarged letter (capital) generally stands at the beginning of the sentence and the paragraph alike (ibid.:275) (see 2.4.1.below). It concludes a classification of punct. that consists of three 'important' components : the space left blank between words, indentation of the first line of a new paragraph, and the upper case or capital letter written at the beginning of a sentence and at the beginning of a proper name or a title (ibid.:276).

Quirk et al. (1985:1612) considerword-space as part of the hierarchy of punct. But later on they say that, in general, punct.marks are followed by a space, with certain exceptions, namely that a space precedes the opening quotation mark and other bracketing, a space is provided on either side of the dash, and no space on either side of the hyphen (ibid.).

Using capital letters is highly related to punct. It has a grammatical indication, as it marks the beginning of a sentence; and it marks proper names in present-day writing of English. Actually the capital letters were used to mark all nouns in English writing, depending on the Germanic system; thus, it will be dealt with here in a separate section.

5.1. The Capital Letter

In the manuscripts of the Middle Ages it was customary for the first letter in a book or a chapter to be a large and beautifully decorated one, and to mark all the others small (Robert, 1956:215). Since this letter came at the head of the manuscript, it was called a 'capital' from the Latin *caput* which means 'head') (ibid.).(See also Partridge,1964:107.)

After the invention of printing, the printers learned to mark two sets, small and large, and kept them in separate cases on a slanting stand in front of them: the little letters were the lower case, and the large ones were in the upper case (Roberts, 1956: 215).

In older writings all nouns were written with an initial capital, but now capitals are used with proper nouns and, in general, with names of places or adjectives derived from them, e.g. *England (English),* for instance, with names of months and days of the week (ibid.). Capitals are also used with the nouns representing personified abstractions (Vallins,1951:130).

Common nouns, Vallins (ibid.:131) continues, take capital letters when they have a particular, not general, significance, and also when they are associated with proper nouns and adjectives that qualify such nouns as well, e.g. *the Earth* (as a planet). He adds at last the use of capitals with the initials of the titles of books, sections, or chapters. In conclusion, he says that the use of capitals, like punct., should correspond with the intended meaning (ibid.)

Carey (1960:85) remarks that capitals are not only used after a full stop, but after a comma when it precedes an opening quotation or direct speech. He refers also to the custom of using capitals in each new line of poetry, even though this usage is about to be abandoned (ibid.).

Brittain (1950:6) says that such a use of capitals is only an example of a musical notation aid to the person who reads a poem aloud, and he restricts the use of a capital as a punct.mark to the beginning of a new sentence, or an interpolated sentence (i.e. inside a quotation).

However, Carey (1960:86) concludes that there is no right or wrong way in using capitals, and that giving any rules on such use is neither possible nor desirable. But the main 'rule', according to him, is to be consistent, orderly, and methodical even in minor points (ibid.:86-87). The same conclusion is arrived at by Gowers (1973:241).

The functional classification of capitals that are strictly given by Partridge (1964) deserves a special mention. There are proper names capitals, the punctuational, the rhetorical, the abbreviation, and the trade names (commercial) group of capitals(ibid.:107). Moreover, there are the typographical, the literary, the official, the religious, the calendar, the historical, the geographical, and the scientific group of capitals (ibid.:109-116).

The punctuational is used after a full stop, after a q.m. and an ex.m., and after a colon when it announces a definition, a formal description, a list, and a speech (ibid.:108). The religious capitals contain the beginning of the Deity, as *God, Redeemer, ...;* pronouns and possessive adjectives relateto the Deity; the Bible and the parts of It; and so on (ibid.:112).

Moreover, in another place Partridge (ibid.:128-29) says that there are two modes in using capitals for emphasis: *initial* and *small* capitals. However, he concludes that they must be used with utmost discretion and scrupulous moderation (ibid.:129).

5.2. The Full Stop (.)

It is called a 'full stop' in British English and a 'period' in American English (Leech,1989:401). Quirk et al.(1985:1624 n.) refer to this and add that a period is also called a full point or (informally) a dot.

Graves and Hodge (1947) differentiate between the full stop and the dot. The former occurs at the end of the sentence (ibid.:98), and the latter is used for abbreviation (ibid.:100).

Vallins (1951:102) says that the term 'period' is applied to both the sentence[(1)]and the stop at the end of it. Partridge (1964:9) gives all the names of 'the stop', namely *point* – elliptical for *full* (or *perfect*) *point*, *full* (or *complete*) *pause*, *full stop*, and *period* ; the first is obsolescent, the second is obsolete, the third is preferred by most people, and the last is preferred by most scholars and printers.

He also gives the reason behind using the term 'period', i.e. the fact that it comes at the end of *a period*, adding that it is rarely used nowadays (ibid.). The term 'full stop', on the other hand, plainly explains its name: here ends the statement or the sentence (ibid.).

Vallins (1951:102) describes the full stop as the basic mark of punct.that marks the end of a complete thought, referring to the traditional definition of a sentence[(2)] . (See also Partridge,1964:12)

Brittain (1950:6) gives *meaning* to the periodin saying that it is the end of a complete statement, referring to the function of a sentence[(3)].

Kane (1983:612) offers a grammatical definition of the full stop according to which it closes declarative sentences[(4)]– those which state a fact, perception, idea, belief, and feeling – and it may close an imperative sentence or command as well.

Carey (1960:22-23) sees the full stop as being related to a rule concerning the syntactic aspect of a sentence: between any two full stops there should be a sentence in the grammatical sense of the word. He means that it should contain at least one finite verb (ibid.:23).

Partridge (1964:10) states that "many compound and some complex sentences require nothing but a full stop"; e.g. *He went early that day andgot thechoresfinished by seven o'clock.* Their "continuity of subject" prevents the occurrence of any mark, save the full stop (ibid.). This is a basis for the use of the full stop also expressed by Gowers (1973:254), who says: "always use a full stop to separate statements between which there is no continuity of thought."

Quirk et al. (1985) mention the full stop only twice, first with the hierarchy of punct. (ibid.:1612), indicating that its function is separation, and second when they deal with punctuating the sentence (ibid.:1623), indicating that it terminates the sentence [(5)].

Carey (1960:23) says that the full stop may be used at the end of a single word or three or four words that do not amount to a sentence or even a clause, adding that these words are used in conversational questions in correspondence with spoken words.

He states further that a short phrase, which is closely related to the sentence (in a conversation or in normal writing) can stand *on its own*, followed by a full stop (ibid.), as in this example: 'We do not plead guilty ofhaving been mistaken in our attitude from the start. *Far from it.'*

Partridge (1964:12), however, remarks that this is not a sentence, but "a kind of a short hand" of a sentence. Many writers prefer the re-writing of 'imperfect' or 'clipped' [(6)] sentences as in the following example (ibid.):
'*He acted as though he were an all-powerful dictator. Not that he ever would beone*',is to be re-written thus:'*He acted as though he were an all-powerful dictator – notthat he would be one.'*

Brittain (1950:10), who is an American writer, calls such sentences "fragmentary statements" whose ideas can be suggested with lesser degrees of completeness: the dependent clause, the phrase, and the single word. As a result, "they must be joined, as modifiers, to the subject or the predicate of an independent clause" to make their meaning clear (ibid.).

Finally, the other use of a full stop is in marking an abbreviation. Brittain says that this is an "unpunctuational" use of it, and he calls itan "abbreviational point".

However, Carey (1960:24) deals with this use quickly and remarks that it need not "detain us long", whereas Partridge (1964:42) devotes a chapter to the periods (and commas) that are used in abbreviation. (See also Quirk et al.,1985:1637)

5.3 The Comma (,)

As Partridge (1964:14) suggests that the importance of the comma as "the shortest pause" comes after "the longest pause" (the full stop), so it will be dealt with here next to the full stop.

Comma comes from the transliteration of Greek *komma*, which is related to *koptein*, meaning 'a cutting'; hence, a part is cut off from the rest of the sentence (ibid.).

Carey (1960:38) expresses the importance of the comma in a proverbial way[(7)] : "Take care of the comma and the other stops will take care of themselves ";i.e. if the writer gets his commas well, the rest of punctuation marks will run smoothly with him.

Nash (1986:115) remarks that "the comma is the busiest of the stops, and probably the most difficult to use effectively."

(See also Vallins, 1951:102, and Kane,1983:622) Quirk et al. (1985:1615) ascribe this difficulty to its being the most flexible in range of use.

Partridge (1964:14) states that in modern usage the comma greatly serves the grammar of the sentence, while in its earlier usage it indicated primarily the rhetorical pause. Quite often it still does; Olson (1999:7) compares its indication to the reader to pause, to the blinking yellow light that tells the driver to slow down and proceed with caution.

However, according to Partridge (1964:14), to attempt a rigid division between rhetorical and grammatical uses of commas would be 'stupid', (and this, according to Partridge, applies to punctuation, in general).

On the other hand, Vallins (1951:102) says that when it is used scientifically and with a due regard for its varied functions, it becomes the writer's ally in his efforts to communicate with the reader, whereas an errant, superfluous, or omitted comma may cause a great confusion.

He concludes (ibid.:107) that to use a comma or not to use it depends on the writer's taste and fancy; yet not altogether in modern days, since punctuation has tended to become more formal and scientific up to the point that the writer could be judged by his usage of commas.

More than thirty years after Vallins (1951), Nash (1986) sees an opposite opinion, concerning the comma. He says that modern writers tend to use commas less carefully, in obedience to rules, than their counterparts of eighteenth and nineteenth century (ibid.:115). For "the phrasing of a text is left to the interpretive choice of the reader."(Ibid.).

Carey (1960:125) suggests that the comma has "a realm of discretion"; there are two opposite tendencies of discretion. The first one is for avoiding confusion, and it is highly related to context[(8);] the second is for avoiding to change meaning (ibid.). Here are two examples (ibid.:125-26) for both, respectively:

(a) A great deal (,) of course (,) could be omitted.
(b) He acquainted me with the facts (,) which he states with scrupulous fairness.

Quirk et al. (1985:1615) mention two functions for the comma: the dominant one is to separate, and the other is to correlate. The first one is to separate certain units in a sentence, and the second is related to "correlative commas". They are used to mark off a unit loosely attached to the rest of the sentence; they are two commas used for inclusion: the first one indicates the beginning and the second the end of the included unit (ibid.:1625). They say that one of the correlative commas is omitted "if it coincides with a higher mark"(see Quirk et al.'s hierarchy of punctuation in 2.4.above).

Nash (1986:125) suggests a semantic function for correlative commas, viz. suspension such as with apposition and qualifying phrases. The other rhetorical function of the comma is emphasis; e.g. *He was a very able, but dishonest, man* (Partridge, 1964:19).

With the previous functions, the comma comes in various constructions where it affects structure and, consequently, meaning; hence, it will be dealt with in the following subsections.

5.3.1. Comma with coordination[(9)]:

(1) There are syndetic coordination (with coordinator) and asyndetic coordination (without coordinator)(Quirk etal.,1985:918). A syndetic coordination is distinguished by a punct. stop, usually a comma; it is stylistically marked. It is used for "dramatic intensification", and to suggest an open-ended list. E.g. *I must, I can, I will* (ibid.:1616). Asyndetic coordination comes with adjectives and adverbs; e.g. *He walked with long, slow strides* (ibid.:1618). Gowers (1973:252) says that such a use of comma is merely for emphasis.

(2) The comma does not separate two independent clauses unless there is a coordinator between them, apart from their semantic connection (Quirk et al., 1985:1615). For example

History is a story that cannot be told in dry lines, and its meaning cannot be conveyed in a species of geometry.(Kane,1983:622)

However, Carey (1960:42-43) says that the comma is unnecessary between short and closely related clauses; e.g. *The rain began to come down heavily and I was soon wet through.*

On the other hand, Partridge (1964:30) calls the one who inserts a comma between two principal clauses, which are joined by a coordinator and share the same subject, "over-punctuator".

But, he adds that the comma is advisable if one of these clauses is an adversative type of a sentence and one wants to emphasize the contrast, and its omission would "jar a sensitive reader"; e.g. *John felt ill, but nobody seemed to care* (ibid.).

Nonetheless, Brittain (1950:40) says that the comma could be inserted between two clauses linked by *and* when the writer wants to emphasize that he is describing two separate actions, or, as Carey (1960:46) says, when one or both of the clauses are long.

(3) When more than two coordinate clauses are combined by different coordinators, the comma (or other stop) is inserted to make clear the major constituent structure boundary in such "a mixed multiple coordinate construction" (Quirk et al.,1985:926). E.g. *I'll pay for the meal and you pay for the taxi, or perhaps I'll pay for both* (ibid.).

(4) A "serial comma", as Quirk et al.(1985:1615-16) call it, is more than one comma required between three or more elements (words, phrases, clauses) that are coordinated but only the last one is preceded by a coordinator (*and* or *or).* They add that to put the comma before the coordinator is a matter of choice (ibid.:1619). However, Fowler (1968 s.v. *stops:*588) favors the insertion of the comma before the coordinator, i.e. to avoid ambiguity, and to gain uniformity,

(see Carey,1960:26). For these reasons Nash (1986:118) calls this comma "a balancing comma"; e.g.

He took from his trunk a pair of shoes, an old hat, and an opera cloak that appeared to have seen better days.

Finally, using more than one *and* with the serial comma is related to emphasis and rhythm, as Kane (1983:627) says; e.g. *He needs bread, and eggs, and cheese.*

5.3.2. Comma with subordination

Depending on the function of subordination, Quirk et al. (1985:1047) distinguish major categories of subordinate clauses: nominal, adverbial, relative, and comparative. What are related to the use of the comma is the adverbial and relative clauses, and the nominal clauses when they function as appositives [(10)].

(1) Partridge (1964:31-32) refers to four facts when dealing with commas in complex sentences [(11)].He shows those facts with four groups of examples. In the first and second group the subordinate clauses come after the main clauses, but the first group has no comma (as in a below) and the second has a comma (as in the following b):

(a) He went to bed because he felt ill.
(b) He doesn't like me, because he thinks me a rival.

The comma is inserted in the second example owing to the function of the subordinate clauses[(12)]. In (a) the subordinate clause functions as adverbial adjunct, whereas in (b) it functions as adverbial disjunct. Disjuncts [(13)]tend to be punctuated with a comma in final position, but when the subordinators introduce an adjunct clause there is no need for a comma (Quirk et al,1985:1628).

Partridge's (1964:32) third group has the subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence wherein the insertion or omission of a comma is also a matter of taste. However, he concludes that it is advisable to insert a comma, and that is to help the silent reader as it helps the speaker; e.g. *Until we left the house, he refused to go.*

Partridge's (1964:32) fourth group has the same position of the subordinate clause, but the subject ischanged: *Because I resemble him very closely, hedoesn't like me.* Here the cause for inserting a comma is strengthened especially for the full punctuator (ibid.).

He adds that when, either the main or the subordinate clause, or both of them, are long, the comma becomes advisable, if not obligatory, and its omission causes vagueness.

(2) However, Quirk et al. (1985:1627) state that punctuation is generally determined by the function of an adverbial more than by its length or structure – whether a single word, a phrase, or a clause, though they prefer a comma with a long adverbial.

Carey (1960:55) regards the modern usage of commas with adverbial phrases extravagant and unnecessary, unless it tends to convey a precise shade of meaning (like, emphasis, or afterthought).

Kane (1983:631) calls the kinds of adverbial that take a comma after them at the beginning of the sentence"sentence adverb" [(14)] ; e.g. *Further, Hamlet's worldis a world ofriddles.* Such adverbials can be idiomatic phrasessignaling logical relationship as with: *for example, on the other hand, of course*, …(ibid.:632).

Summing up using the comma with adverbials is an advice suggested by Kane (1983:631): they must be understood as loose generalization, which a skillful writer ignores or adopts to his particular need to be emphatic, clear, or even rhythmic.

(3) The absolute clause [(15)]is another construction the comma comes with. Consider these examples:

(a) *Lunch finished*, the guests retired to the lounge.
(b) *No further discussion arising*, the meeting was brought to a close.
(c) *Christmas then only days away*, the family was pent up with excitement.

We see above that Quirk et al. (1985) exclude the infinitive from absolute clauses, for it does not function as an adverbial. However, Nash (1986:121) mentions that infinitive clauses are used adverbially but with "zero punctuation", save that when they are used to comment or evaluate a statement a comma is necessary; e.g. *To be strictly honest, I am no grammarian.*

(4) Coming to relative clauses, there are, in general, two kinds of them: restrictive and nonrestrictive, or, to use Partridge's (1964:35) expressions, defining and non-defining. A nonrestrictive clause, which is set off by a comma (or commas), gives additional information (as in this sentence); whereas a restrictive one, which has no comma, limits the application of the word it modifies [(16)](Thomas et al.,1928:159). Thus, the insertion or omission of a comma before the relative pronoun reflects a clear distinction in sense (Carey,1960:51).

(5) Finally, there are restrictive and nonrestrictive appositives; the latter is indicated in writing by setting it off between two commas, or other heavier punctuation (Quirk et al., 1985:1303-04). Here are two examples to distinguish between them (ibid.:1304):
(a) Mr. Campbell, a lawyer, was here last night.
(b) Mr. Campbell the lawyer was here last night.

5.3.3. Other uses of the comma

(1) The comma is used to mark off the vocative or nominative address[(17)]; e.g. *Tell me, Joan, how long did it take you?* (Bradley, 1943:26).
(2) The use of the comma after 'yes' and 'no', according to Bradley (1943:26), is for rhetorical effect. Partridge (1964:38) gives this use a semantic term: a comma with 'assent' and 'dissent', i.e. with 'yes' and 'no' respectively.
(3) Another use of the comma is before 'tag-phrases': *Voltaire wrote **Candide**, didn't he?* (Nash, 1986:118)
(4) Partridge (1964:36) says that the comma is obligatory when the statement precedes the stating – a pair of

commas are used when the stating interrupts the statement (ibid.).

(5) Quirk et al. (1985:1619) remark that it is disallowed to insert a comma between the central elements of the sentence (subject, verb, object, and complement), except with 'inclusion' and 'specification', that is with correlative commas, parenthesis, or quot. marks (see Nash, 1986:123). However, they mention another exception, namely when a comma comes between the subject and the verb to prevent confusion (ibid.:1620); as : *What his nameis, is of no interest to me.*

(6) On the other hand, a comma is allowed between a subject-verb sequence and a direct object in direct speech (ibid.). E.g. *Tell Richard, 'You're my best friend.'* (Ibid.:1023) Nash (1986:122) remarks that it is optional to insert a comma between a noun clause occurring as *a fronted direct object.* Consider his example (ibid.:123):*How thepoor are to survive (,) no one will say*.

(7) Brittain (1950:14) gives another usage of the comma where it indicates that *at thispoint there is an omission from the sentence,* a small element, which the reader can easily supply for himself; e.g. *To error is human; to forgive, divine*.

According to ***Manual of Style*** (1959:102) putting a comma for brevity or convenience instead of a word or words is understood from the context:

In Illinois there are seventeen such institutions; in Ohio, twenty; in India, thirteen.

5.4. The Colon (:)

Fowler (1968 s.v. *stops:*589) says that in the earlier hierarchy of punct. the colon comes after the full stop in importance; but in modern time the semicolon takes its place. (See Partridge,1964:52)

However, it is mentioned after the full stop in the ***Encyclopaedia Britannica*** (1974 s.v. *Punctuation:*15: 276), stating that the colon was once used as the full stop, followed by a capital letter. But now it serves mainly to indicate the beginning of a list, a summary, or a quotation.

In Quirk et al.'s (1985:1612) hierarchy of punct., which depends on separation units (see 2.4.above), the colon is placed between the comma and the semicolon. That is because it indicates a closer interdependence between the units separated than does the semicolon; in fact, it sometimes indicates a closer relation than that indicated by the comma but in a different way, since its separation is sharper than that of the comma (ibid.).

That illustrates the meaning of its name, as Greek *kolon* means a person's limb, i.e. a man division, i.e. a clause in a sentence (Partridge,1964:52). Hence, a colon originally means a separate limb of a sentence (Grave and Hodge,1947:101).

Brittain (1950:49) states that the colon comes at the end of a complete statement that could stand alone as a sentence, though it is not always true as in these two sentences that show both cases respectively:

(a) Mrs. James found herself in a quandary: she could neither pay for the unwanted good nor return them to the store.
(b) The normal order of an English sentence is: subject, verb, and object or verb complement.

Brittain (1950:48) gives one *meaning* for its use, viz. "a full explanation": the two parts that the colon comes between are related, i.e. the second one is a full explanation of the first (as in a). He concludes that this usage re-emphasizes the point that punct. exists to enable the writer convey his meaning not only clearly but effectively.

Vallins (1951:108) refers to its actual use as an introducer in saying that it introduces a quotation, a passage of direct speech, or a list of items. If not, i.e. not used as an introducer, it should usually divide two parallel or antithetical clauses; e.g. *Law is the essence of freedom: license only leads to tyranny.*

Fowler (1968 s.v. *stops:* 589) says that its use as an introducer is the proper one in modern time, and considers the use of the colon with contrasted clauses (as in Vallins' example) unnecessary and can be abandoned. However, using the colon as an introducer or an antithetical is not the only use of the colon; there are others that should be mentioned despite their lesser occurring.

Being very strict in his classification, Partridge (1964:52-61) gives more than ten kinds of colons. The first two kinds, an annuciatory (an introducer) colon, as in (b) above, and an explanatory or definitional colon, as in (a) above, are closely related to each other as both of them used as a mark of anticipation (ibid.:53).

Quirk et al. (1985:1621n.) remark that in British English the capital is not used after the colon, but in any case it is used if the part that is introduced by the colon consists of more than one sentence, or it is a quotation, as in (a) above.

Nash (1986:112) says that the colon may express the force of 'namely', 'for example', 'to wit', etc. Quirk et al. (1985:1621) state that when the colon precedes a formal list, often preceded by its verbal equivalents: (for example [e.g.], namely [viz.], that is [i.e.], etc.). However, when they introduce one item or two a comma is sufficient before them (ibid.:1622). (See Carey,1960:28 , and Nash,1986:112)

Partridge (1964:55) slightly refers to the colon with appositives in saying that it can take the place of the comma. Quirk et al. (1985:1620) state that to place a colon to separate appositives from its preceding main clause is a classic function of it, adding that its function as an explication of what precedes can be viewed as being in apposition.

Partridge (1964:55) mentions "the equipollent and equivalent" colon or "the balancing colon ". He says that the balance usually occurs between clauses in a compound sentence[(18)], which does not have a conjunction. There is no strict precision to differentiate them, but the balancing colon

is perceived clearly with mind and senses; e.g. (ibid.:56) *He died poor: he died indigent: he expired in penurious circumstances.* He mention also a parallelistic colon used in verse writing (ibid.).

The other two kinds are "the antithetic" and "the oppositional" colons (ibid.:55-57); consider the following: (See also Nash, 1986:112)
Where there's a will, there is a way, they tell us: where there's a way, there need be no will.

Partridge (1964:58) introduces three other kinds of colons where it can be replaced by either a conjunction or other punctuation marks: "a compensatory colon", "an interpolative colon", and "a substitutive colon". E.g. *You like him: nobody does* (ibid.).

The tenth kind is a cumulative or progressive colon which is used when a series of related acts, a logical development of argument, or a deliberate creation of increasing effect are intended (ibid.:59); e.g. *Charles rose warily to meet the threat: the intruder rushed at him: attacker and attacked fell heavily*.

The other kind of the colon, Partridge (ibid.) continues, is "a conclusive colon" (see Nash,1986:112); e.g.

If one does such things, one suffers, and you have done such things: therefore you are suffering, or you will.

The very last two kinds of Partridge (1964:60-61) are "the prompotional" and "the non-punctuational" colons. The latter does not concern our subject, whereas the former does. It is used when a multiplicity of semicolons is placed more than twice in a long sentence.

So far Nash's (1986:113) conclusive words will summarize the colon's function: "What colons mark is a kind of turn about between action and reaction, fact and explanation, process and consequence.

5.5. The Semicolon (;)

Partridge (1964:44) states that historically the semicolon comes after the colon, and its name indicates *half a colon.* Yet, in practice the semicolon is more important; it comes after the full stop and the comma in the sense of being more popular (ibid.). Vallins (1951:108) comments that the semicolon is like the comma in that it has to be used wisely, and with definite purpose.

To comparing it to the comma and the full stop, Carey (1960:30) remarks that the semicolon is heavier than the first, but lesser than the second.

Semantically speaking, the semicolon joins two clauses that have a close connection in thought, although they are grammatically independent of each other (Bradley,1943:45).

Brittain (1950:43) gives a rhetorical difference between the comma with a coordinator and the semicolon: if the writer wants his sentence to be read more smoothly he will put "a commaed and", and if he wants it to get a more crisp effect he will put a semicolon. E.g. *Languages are not invented; they grow with our need for expression* (Kane,1983:619). Quirk et al. (1985:1622) regard it as "a coordinating mark" of punctuation, since it corresponds, mostly in value, to the linguistic coordinating conjunction 'and' between independent clauses.

Carey (1960:30) comments that to insert a full stop instead of a semicolon may produce a jerky effect, especially if the meaning is highly connected. Kane (1983:619) says that putting a semicolon instead of a connector between clauses of contrasting sense forces a reader to see the contrast effectively.

Partridge (1964:45) states that one of the purposes of the semicolon is to convey antithesis, i.e. an antithetical semicolon; e.g. *He quailed at the prospect; yet he was a brave man.*

Partridge (1964:45), however, says that the semicolon may occasionally separate two coordinated clauses, and "this is done at the discretion of the writer and when the clauses are relatively long and complicated, containing commas within themselves." Kane (1983:619) says that that occurs when the writer wants a significant pause for emphasis and rhythm; e.g. *So silence appeared like Death; and now she had death in her heart.*

Quirk et al. (1985:1623), more clearly, state that the semicolon is used in sentences whose complexity already involves one or more commas and whose divisions call for a superior mark; that is to prevent a reader from momentarily puzzling or misleading. In other words, Gowers (1973:262) says that in such sentences the semicolon may be advisable or appropriate to direct the reader's attention aright, or to enable him to catch his breath – the semicolon is only good manners.

More specific uses of the semicolon, Nash (1986:113) suggests that it could be used between two sentences the second of which specifies something implied in the first (an inference semicolon). Consider his example (ibid.:114):

Syntactic and expressive functions often overlap; the comma is therefore an ambivalent mark of punctuation.

Partridge (1964:45) mentions another purpose of the semicolon, viz. accumulation. This occurs when semicolons are inserted between principal clauses in cumulative development of narration, or progression of the main theme, i.e. a progressive semicolon; e.g. *He worked hard; he played hard; he lived hard.*

Quirk et al. (1985:1623) state that the chief point at which the semicolon shows affinity with the colon is the convention of putting it before apposition indicators *for example, that is, namely*, etc. In fact, apposition is one of the roles of conjuncts[(19)]; the semicolon nearly precedes most of the adverbial conjuncts, as they connect sentences, paragraphs, or even texts. E.g. *You are a linguist; then, you're a scholar* (Partridge,1964:46).

"The literary" or "the eighteenth century" semicolon is another kind of it, as Partridge (ibid.:49) calls it. Writers in the eighteenth century used it in various ways to show off their subtlety, fine grammatical, as well as superfine rhetorical distinctions (ibid.).More strictly, Nash (1986:113) suggests that the semicolon is the master stop of literary prose.

One last point Partridge (ibid.:50) adds is that the semicolon comes with elements of the sentence smaller than clauses. The importance of the subject, he explains, sometimes needs a decisive particularization and weighty consideration of each division the semicolon comes in between. This point can be included with another one, viz. to use the semicolon as a device of emphasis, as Partridge (ibid.:131) mentions later on. For example (ibid.:50)

Fear; shame; remorse; contrition; such are the subdivision of this notablebook.

5.6. The Parentheses (…) , and the Brackets […]

Vallins (1951), Carey (1960), and Nash (1986) treat the parentheses and the brackets as one mark of punctuation, symbolized *( )*, whereas Partridge (1964:65) regards brackets as kind of parentheses. He adds that they are called *square parentheses* in American English, and called *brackets* in British English. (See Quirk etal.,1985:1630n.)

In fact, they cannot be one mark because they are not different in form only (as they are cleared in the above title), but they are different in use as well. However, what makes parentheses mixed with the terms brackets, dashes, and even commas is its name *parenthesis* that can be applied grammatically to a parenthetical clause [(20)], which can be set off by the above (pair of) marks.

Fowler (1968 s.v.*stops:*592) states that the "parentheses may be indicated in any one of four ways: by square brackets, by round brackets, by dashes, and by commas." Quirk et al.(1985:1629) call such marks "correlative marks" that can be used to mark the separation of included units when these are positioned medially or finally.

Thus, “without them, the sentence is grammatically and logically complete: they explain or modify, but they do not determine the sense.” (Partridge,1964:63) However, the interruption of the parentheses (or brackets) in a sentence is sharper than other interruptions especially of the correlative commas, and that what Vallins (1951:109) and Brittain (1950:56) see.

Partridge (1964:63-66) mentions four kinds of parentheses in terms of their function, viz. parentheses of comment, of explanation, of unimportant afterthought, and of reference. (See Carey,1960:66)

According to Quirk et al. (1985:1629) parentheses are used in three cases: when there is a disruption in the syntactic structure of the clause, or a danger of confusion with other marks (a comma, for instance), or failure to mark a lengthy inclusion, (though only the first kind is used in the translations studied).

They add that no punct. mark is used before the closing parenthesis, including the full stop, if there is an insertion of a clause inside another independent one (ibid.). But "if a sentence is included as a digression in a paragraph, parentheses are required and final punct. mark precedes the closing parenthesis." (Ibid.) E.g. (ibid.:1629-30)

They decide that it was impossible to recreate Vietnam battle scenes, since the war was still on and they felt that philippines were unacceptable substitute. (*Apocalypse Now, made in the Philippines, didnot change their feeling.*) So they set to work on a home front drama.

Turning to the brackets, Quirk et al. (1985:1630n.) summarize the brackets (or square brackets) usage in three points. First, that "they are sometimes used when inclusion have to be made within inclusion"; second, they are used to include the author's or editor's comment upon form rather than content in serious writing; third, they are also used for explanation of the reference of pronouns; e.g. *Martin Tutin claimed that she [the Prime Minister] was chiefly responsible for the crisis* (ibid.:1630n.).

5.7. The Dash (-)

Partridge (1964:63) calls the parentheses and the dash the "supernumeraries" in correspondence with major punct. marks (the full stop, the comma, the colon, the semicolon).

Semantically, Nash (1986:125) regards pair of commas, pair of dashes, and brackets (parentheses) as levels of parenthesis that represent varying levels of "scoring" or "suspension". (See also Vallins (1951:109)

Brittain (1950:52) sees that it has become the most troublesome mark of punct. in English writing, since it has been used out of its place. Thus, he advises not to use it so much because it may annoy a sensitive reader (ibid.). Carey (1960:69) points out that he approaches the dash with caution because it is overused, although it is a mark that is needed.

Gowers (1973:252) gives the reason behind that in saying that the dash itself tempts writer to use it as a punctuation-of-all-work that saves him the trouble of choosing the right stop, or it could be the use of the dash as a rhetorical device that may be out of its place in prose.

Kane (1983:641) says that the dash acts as a stronger and more significant pause than the comma and less formal equivalent to the semicolon, the colon, and the parenthesis. "For that reason it should be used sparingly, reserved for occasions when emphasis is really needed."(Ibid.)

Brittain (1950:63) separates between the function of the single dash and the pair of dashes; the first has an explanatory function, and the second, a violent interruption. But, Partridge (1964:68-74) strictly mentions more than ten functions of the dash, and he sees that there is no functional difference between a single and a pair of dashes, where the position of the dash is the determining factor.

He firstly mentions two kinds of dashes that are related to each other, viz. the parenthetical (ibid.:68), and the interjective (ibid.:71). Both of them interrupt the sentence; but, according to him, the second one is stronger in its interruption than the first, regarding the sense. Here is an example of the second kind: *Somewhere over there – yes, there he is – you can see the heavy weight champion of Gambogia*(ibid.).
Partridge (1964:70) adds that the dash can do the purpose of heightening the preliminary word or word-group when it comes after them immediately. He says that these preliminaries might be an adjectival or adverbial clause; e.g. *Him – nothis brother – the chieftain feared* (ibid.).

Vallins (1951:111) says that the dash is only used as 'a dramatic pause': "it is the sign of dramatic pause, and therefore a particularly expressive stop, designed to represent a deliberate accent of the voice or gesture of the body." He gives Pope's line as an example (ibid.:112), changing or substituting the dash by zero punctuation or a comma the line will lose its dramatic effect:

Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take – and sometimes tea.

Partridge (1964:74) calls the previous kind "a deliberate incompleteness", where the dash indicates unexpressed completeness, and the thought is to be hinted. Differently, as Partridge (ibid.:69) sees, it could be at the beginning of a certain sentence to express a dramatic touch; e.g. – *Well, there it was. He had caused the ruin of a public figure.* But this kind is different from the one which comes at the beginning of a dialogue, where it indicates a question and an answer.

Quirk et al. (1985:1629) even suggest that a dash or dashes are used when the writer tends to give a somewhat dramatic and informal impression.

Three kinds of dashes are related to each other; they form one group, using Partridge (1964:71) expression. They are *a dash to segregatea final member, a dash to emphasize*, and *a dash of abrupt cessation*. Here is an example of the third kind, *Where he fell, he died – from an enemy bullet* (ibid.)

An afterthought dash, Partridge (1964:73) suggests, serves to set off, to emphasize, to set apart an afterthought moredefinitely, more forcibly than a comma, but less decisively than a semicolon; e.g. *Certainly you shall have all money you need – if only I can find some*. He also distinguishes an appositive dash, i.e. a dash that comes to emphasize the structure and the sense of the apposition (ibid.:69).

The resumptive and the annunciatory dashes are two kinds the dash that express certain stylistic situations either by a single or pair of dashes, as Partridge (ibid.:72) says. The first kind above comes after an elaborate beginning, followed the resumptive word or words; the second kind comes after an annunciatory or collectively anticipatory word or word-group which it precedes a list, or a detailed exposition.

More simply, Carey (1960:72) states that a very common use of the dash is that before a clause that summarizes, or gathers up the threads of a list, i.e. the resumptive dash. The second kind, the annunciatory (an explanatory) dash, is just the opposite; it highly resembles the colon in such a use. See Partridge's (1964:72) example:

He swiftly gathered his few possessions – gun and guitar, book and best bolero, one spare shirt and two pairs of socks – and crossed the border.

Another kind is "the end at last dash" that comes after a long sentence; it is a conclusive one because in time the reader thinks the sentence infinite, the dash in a panic comes to dash it to a conclusive (ibid.).

Finally, the dash may be accompanied with other punctuation marks to indicate an effective mark, but writers differ in their view towards that. Carey (1960:71) affirms that "no stop should ever be placed immediately before a dash except a question-mark, … or an exclamation-mark", and no stop can ever come immediately after a dash, whereas he mentions in another place the dash with a colon, but as one mark.

On the other hand, Partridge (1964:86) lists seven forms of "compound points" that consist of pair of marks; one number of each pair is a dash: the comma dash [, -],the semicolon dash [; -], the colon dash [: -], the period dash [. -], the parentheses dash [-( )-],or single [-( ], [ )-], q.m. and dash[? -], and ex.m. and dash [! -]. He considers the first four forms true punctuation marks. They indicate more strong meaning than their single form, since the dash strengthens the single mark and in some instances connotes abruptness, whereas the last two ([? -], [! -]) have rhetorical or elocutionary symbols plus an ordinary dash (ibid.). He adds that they are to be used with caution and moderation (ibid.).

5.8 The Quotation Marks (Inverted Commas)"…", and the Italics (Underlining)

Quotation (Quot.) marks or inverted commas, both denote the direct speech as they must enclose the *actual* words of the speaker (Carey, 1960:76). However, Partridge (1964:122) does not accept inverted commas, which he describes as inaccurate terms produced by a notable authority to come to be used with the sweepingly stated quot. marks; they are primarily used to indicate the exact words of the speaker of a text.

There are two forms of quot. marks: double "…" and single '…'. (See Quirk et al.,1985:1630). However, there is no universal acceptance between the single and the double form (Fowler, 1968 s.v. *stops:* 591). In other words, there is no technical distinction between them; "it is obviously convenient to have two kinds when the necessity arises of using one set within another"(Carey, 1960:79).

Vallins (1951:113) remarks that quot. marks are the most troublesome marks in punct.; they are nuisance to the writer because they puzzle him in determining their correct relationship with other stops. In fact, quot. marks are an

invention of modern usage, as there had no quot. mark in the eighteenth century (Treble and Vallins,1939 cited in Gowers, 1973:256).

Fowler (1968 s.v. *stops:*591) says that "there are two schools of thought, which might be called the conventional and the logical", concerning the position of the stops in/out the quot. marks (ibid.). The conventional prefers to put stops within the inverted commas, on condition of having no ambiguity (ibid.). Fowler (ibid.) turns to the logical school that punctuate according to sense; it puts stops outside the inverted commas except when they actually form part of the quot.

Before turning to the purposes of quot. marks, it is better to mention another mark of punct., viz. italics (in printing) or underlining (in handwriting). For it shares few of its purposes with quot. marks.

"Italics … printing is in different type from roman … or ordinary type" of writing (Partridge,1964:118). It has been a distinctive or decorative function, as Fowler (1968 s.v. *italics:*313) describes; they are achieved when italicizing chapter headings, prefaces, dedications, and other material of a special status. However, he sees that the true function of italics is to draw the reader's attention to a particular point left to their discernment (ibid.).

Partridge (1964:122) asserts that *italics* and *quot. marks* are to be used sparingly as much as possible, since they should light the way not darken it. It is mentioned that the main function of quot. marks is to quote; and one of the purposes of italics, as well as one of the ways that indicates a speech or a quotation is to be italicized.

Quotation marks are used for emphasis depending on the importance of a word or a word-group; quot. marks make them stand out from the context, and "their relevant purpose is to emphasize the idea-aspect of the words concerned: hence, one must guard against excessive use"(ibid.:129). On the other hand, Partridge (ibid.:118) adds that italics also indicates emphasis (for a word or word-group); yet a good writer may use it only when he cannot get the required emphasis in any other way, preferring stylistically either structural, or rhetorical means for emphasis. (See also Quirk et al.,1985:1635, and Carey,1960:87)

There are purposes that are shared between the quot. marks and italics mentioned by Partridge (ibid.:120-24), and other writers refer to them (see Quirk et al.,1985:1635). There are used to indicate antithesis, particularization (emphasis), and technical, slang, and dialect terms. In fact, Quirk et al. (1985:1610) deal with both quot. marks and italics, regarding that they share a general function together, viz. *specification*.

Finally, it is better to mention Partridge's (1964:170-75) listing of "the modes of quotation", two of which are mentioned earlier: quoted through quot. marks, and through italics. The third one is the use of the initial capital at the beginning of the quotation (ibid.:171).

The fourth mode of quoting Partridge (ibid.:172) mentions is to use a comma, a colon, or, very rarely, a colon dash to introduce a speech or a quotation. He remarks that the comma is the point which most suitable before short quotation (ibid.:173).

The other three modes Partridge (1964:171-72) mentions are not important, since they are rarely used.

5.9 The Question Mark (?), and the Exclamation Mark(!)

The question mark (q. m.), in British English, is known as an interrogative mark or point in American English.The exclamation mark(ex.m.) is similarly known as an exclamation point in American English (Partridge,1964:79). Partridge (ibid.) regards them supplementary marks in correspondence to others; strictly speaking, he says that they are rhetorical or elocutionary marks rather than 'punctuational'.

Quirk et al. (1985:1633) state that both of them have the purpose of specification; the q.m. specifies a question, and the ex.m. specifies an exclamation. They add that they have "the value of a period in as much as what follows begins with the capitalization of a new sentence"; yet when they occur inside a quotation or parentheses, no capital is used after them (ibid.).

It is known that the q. m. comes after a question, but in fact not all questions have a q. m. at the end of them. Firstly, there are direct and indirect questions. The indirect question is expressed as a statement; hence, it does not take a q. m. but a full stop; e.g. *He asked if you were going* (Quirk et al., 1985:613).

There is what is called a declarative question; it is a type of question, which is identical in form to a declarative statement, save the final rising intonation and the q. m., Quirk et al.(1985:814) say. That is what Carey (1960:75) describes "a statement in form and a question in effect". Here is Quirk et al.'s (1985:814) example of the declarative question: *You realize what the risks are*?

There are the rhetorical and the exclamatory types of questions, which Quirk etal.(ibid.:825) consider them minor types. "The rhetorical question is interrogative in structure, but has the force of a strong assertion." (Ibid.) Usually it does not expect an answer, depending on the fact that the answer is a foregone conclusion (ibid.:1478).

In other words, Kane (1983:614) says that it is often asked precisely, since the writer can state the answer, and even when he does not state it, he expects the reader to do (ibid.).

"The exclamatory question is interrogative in structure, but has the … force of exclamatory assertion."(Quirk et al.,1985:825). They clarify their previous statement in saying that the exclamatory question is a negative yes-no question but with a final falling (not rising) tones and an ex. m. instead of a q. m.; e.g. *Wasn't it a marvellous concert*! (Ibid.)

They add that a positive yes-no question is also applied to be an exclamatory question, but there is a semantic difference,

i.e. "the negative question has … an appeal for listener's confirmation; the positive question, on the other hand, implies that the positive response is self-evident…"; e.g. *Did he look annoyed*! (Ibid.)

Carey (1960:74) sees that the form of a statement occasionally bears an ex. m., that is when the sense demands. Brittain (1950:9) says that the ex. m. has meaning, i.e. vehemence, violence, passion; if the writer wants to strike the reader's mind with forcefulness, he will put an ex. m. at the end of a sentence.

Quirk et al. (1985:1633) say that it is quite normal when an ex. m. comes after any sentence that represents a great emotive force, such as *Fire!, Well done!* (See Fowler, 1968 s.v. *stops:*590 , and Bradley,1943:23)

Moreover, they state that the ex. m. does not come after imperative sentences unless they represent very peremptory and urgent commands (Quirk et al.,1985:1634n.); e.g. *"Get inside!" he shouted angrily*. They, however, add that vocatives take an ex. m. when sentences express an urgent warning or command (ibid.). But they remark in another place that exclamation as a formal category of a sentence is restricted to the type of exclamatory sentence introduced by *what* or *how* (ibid:.833). E.g. (ibid.:1633) *What a perceptive article she wrote*!

On the other hand, Kane (1983:614) says that sometimes the ex. m. conveys emphasis; when it comes within a sentence it stresses the preceding word or phrase, and when it ends a sentence it signals the importance of the total statement. But its excessive use for emphasis causes vulgarism (Carey, 1960:74)

Furthermore, there are what Partridge (1964:80) calls the critical question mark (?) and the critical exclamation mark (!); they are formally used as such, within parentheses. Sometimes when the writer (or the editor) wants to draw attention to an element of doubt or to matter that strikes him as a surprising or perhaps regrettable (ibid.). (See also Brittain, 1950:58)

5.10. The Hyphen

Vallins (1951: 128) sees the hyphen a puzzling mark of punct. since there are few rules or costumes to guide writers for its use. That is related to "its infinite variety defies description", i.e. no two dictionaries or two sets of rules are found to give consistently the same advice. Quirk et al. (1985:1614) refer to the hyphen as an element of arbitrariness in punctuation especially in its use.

However, there are two main and distinct functions of hyphens: dividing and compounding (Partridge, 1964:134). "The former kind of hyphenation, concerning single words strictly indivisible, takes place only for typographical or other conventional reasons". The latter concerns the junction of two or more single words into a recognized collective union (ibid.).

Quirk et al. (1985: 1613) consider both of the previous functions or purposes of hyphens as employing within a word. The first is used for word division between lines (and other minor uses); the second is used to mark the parts of a word. That is "to separate the bases of a compound… or to separate the prefix of a word from its base"(ibid.).

Kane (1983: 652) defines compounds as two or more words treated as one word, adding that "English does not treat compounds with much consistency".
Quirk etal. (1985: 1613) describes the second use of the hyphen, i.e. compounding, as a subject of a considerable variation in the practice of publishing houses, individual writers, guidance of dictionaries, and style manuals.

Alternatively, Brittain (1950) calls the hyphen just a half of a single dash (p.55) and non-punctuationalsymbole; it is purely and simply a device of spelling (p.73).

Hyphenated words in fact are at the half way stage of evolution, according to Carey (1960: 80). There are three stages of (two-word) evolution through which close association pairs of words go through: "starting as separate words, in the course of a growing attachment, they become hyphened, until eventually the hyphen drops out and the two words become one". Consider the following instances: contact lens, drawing room (Kane, 1983: 652); tie-pin, wrist-watch; boatman, handkerchief (Carey, 1960:80).

To decide which stage of evolution certain pairs have reached one must depend on observation and instinct, though there will be different opinions (ibid.: 81). Some words are distributed on those stages (e.g. common sense, common-sense, or commonsense, and good will as such).

American English, for instance, inclines to fewer hyphens than British English, since American writers prefer words to be written either open (separated by space) or solid (without separation) rather than hyphenated (Quirk etal., 1985: 1613).

Kane (1983: 252) divides the hyphenated compounds into two kinds: the conventional compound and the nonce compound words. The former cannot tell "how particular compound is conventionally written without consulting a dictionary or observing how publishers print it"(e.g. teenager or teen-ager). The latter is "a construction, usually modifier, made up for a specific occasion and not existing as a standard idiom" (e.g. once-in-at lifetime, till-death-do-us-part marriage).

It is seen that the writer must either consult a dictionary or observe printing to know hyphenated word. Another thing the writer should take care of hyphens is the appearance, as Carey (1960: 81) suggests, which words are going to assume when hyphen drops out (e.g. public house).

Fowler (s.v. hyphens,1968:256) mentions porthole, loophole which they seem to suggest the pronunciation of *th* and *ph*. He comments that some do not admit such compounding (especially in British English), others (especially in American English) may think this overnice.

Carey (1960: 81) concludes that such a compounding is going to have an effect that is displeasing or confusing of

sight or sound; thus they should be hyphenated (public-house, port-hole, loop-hole).

A third important point that writers should give heed to is the confusion of sense, in which the hyphen has a part to play (ibid.: 82). Fowler (s.v. hyphen, 1968: 255) refers to this point in saying that the hyphen is not "an ornament but an aid to being understood, and should be employed only when it is needed for that purpose". In the following sentence, for instance, the omission of the hyphen will change the meaning (ibid.):*The Russians would be well content if they could get all-German talks started on something like their terms.*

In other words, Carey (1960: 81) says that deciding a hyphen does not matter very much so long as the writer depends on his/her reasonable amount of common-sense. Consider Graves and Hodge's (1947: 102) definition of the hyphen: it is used to link words which, if separated, might possibly loose the intended meaning or confusion of the reader's eyes.

Partridge (1964: 136-37) says that compounding, in general, is exceedingly difficult to device a satisfactory rules, since comprehensiveness is purely impossible and there are numerous exceptions. Foweler (s.v. hyphen, 1968:255) states that there is an ample room among the various opinions of where the hyphen is needed, as an aid to understand or related to an individual judgment.

However, there is what it can be called 'a rule' for using the hyphen, i.e. "when two normally unhyphenated words are used in combination as a single epithet, they should be hyphened" (e.g. the poets of nineteenth century, and the nineteenth-century poets) (Carey, 1960:82). Although this 'rule' can be simply observed, the confusion is raised by the pressing-house, which ignore the hyphen. Moreover, "the fact remains that the omission of a hyphen may result in ambiguity (or absurdity)" (ibid.). Consider the examples:
(a) She was regularly present at the end of term parties.
(b) The first air dropped hydrogen bomb …
(c) The atmosphere was very like that of many European villages I have visited in little frequented places.

In (a) either she is unpunctual, or unlucky if a hyphen is inserted in the end-of-term; in (b), either the air dropped the bomb, or it correctly is the air-dropped hydrogen bomb (ibid.). The (a) and (b) examples, Carey (p.83) comments, cause a moment's confusion and delay, but the last one (c) little frequented places means almost the opposite of little-frequented places.

To sum up, the following nine kinds of compound words with hyphens are the most using ones:
1) Noun compounds in which the second base is an adverb, e.g. running up,
2) Adjective compounding in -ed that are formed from noun phrase, e.g. cold-blooded, and an attributive adjective compounds in which the second base is a participle, e.g. far-fetched,
3) Other modifying phrases and clauses, which written open when not modifying, e.g. on-the-spot (investigation) (Quirk et al., 1985: 1613),
4) Certain noun-adjective compounds in which a hyphen is almost customary, e.g. court-martial,
5) Noun-gerund of a transitive verb in which the hyphen is obligatory in British English, e.g. labour-saving, and also for noun-agential noun from a transitive verb, e.g. engine-driver,
6) Verb-noun compounds in which a hyphen is inserted, e.g. cure-all,
7) Compounds ending in in-law(s), e.g. mother-in-law,
8) Relationships in which the first base is great, e.g. great-uncle,
9) Compounds in which the first base is a single capital letter, e.g. U-turn, … (Partridge, 1964:137)

5. 11. The Apostrophe (')

Vallins (1951:125) describes the hyphen and the apostrophe in writing as lacking belongingness to punct. proper. However, once the apostrophe has established itself in English, there is no way of getting rid of it (p.126).

In fact, it is among the marks that has been appeared recently. There was no apostrophes in olden days in England; it is found to make the genitive or possessive case (Bradley, 1943:48). Brittain (1950:75) considers it as a device of spelling, which looks like a single comma placed up above the line.

The Apostrophe's general function, as Quirk et al. (1985: 1611) state, is 'specification', i.e. to specify the ending as genitive. Then they mention where it used; it is frequently used in serious writing to denote genitive singular and plural as the girl's, or the girls'. Though the previous using of apostrophes are indistinguishable in speech (ibid.).

All in all, the apostrophe has three purposes: to replace missing letters, to form contraction, or to show possession (*Punctuation*, 2007). Consider the following examples, respectively:
1) The gov't is set to battle the insurgents Basilan.
2) I'm writing now.
3) Keats's poems were published.

However, there are other uses of the apostrophe. In singular, most words that end in -ces, -cess, -cis, -sces, -scess, -ses, -sess, -sis, -sas(s), -sos(s), -sus, -xes, -xis, -zes, -zis take only the apostrophe, e.g. Xerxes', Ulysses' (Partridge, 1964:158).

Moreover, it is frequently used before the plural with items that lack institutionalized spelling: There are three r's in this sentence. Nonetheless, there is a tendency to use s without apostrophe if there is no danger of misreading as 1990s. (Quirk etal., 1985:1636)

Partridge (1964:160 cited in Vallins, 1952) states that there is a remarkable call in modern usage to omit the apostrophe in plural nouns, where they are adjectival without any real possessive sense. In fact, the sense is not 'of' plus noun but 'for' plus noun such as: Women's Institute, Boys School.

Gowers (1973:240) has a different viewpoint. He remarks that expressions like 'Ten years imprisonment' is a disputed considerations that is whether one should use an apostrophe

or not. He answers in saying that if ten years is regarded as a descriptive genitive (like busman's holiday) one must write years'(in singular a year's imprisonment); "if as an adjectival phrase there must be hyphened"(ibid.).

5.12. The Paragraph

Carey (1960:89) advises writers or editors to spend some care for the task of "judicious division", viz. the paragraph, of a subject-matter; for it affects "the readability" and the sense of what is written. He adds that the mere appearance of the reading-matter subconsciously has an effect on the reader, since dividing certain passage into paragraphs is more inviting to the eye (ibid.).

The importance of the paragraph can be shown in Gowers' words. He says that any kind of texts would be unreadable if they are not divided into paragraphs, describing writing in paragraphs as an art (Gowers, 1973:258).

To some writers, Partridge (1964:166) says, the paragraph is extraneous (i.e. paragraphing rarely affects punctuation), although it may affect the use of quot. marks. But he says in another place that paragraphing is a stylistic division of passages (ibid.:126).

Accordingly, Quirk et al. (1985) deal with paragraph from two sides. The first one is how to punctuate a paragraph (ibid.:1624). They put it at the bottom of the hierarchy of punctuation, though they deal with it extraneously. They say that it often begins with indentation, or it could be written in a "block style"(i.e. without indentation) (ibid.). Paragraph indentation is "the act of starting a line or indeed a set of lines a little way in from the margin of the text" (Partridge, 1964:165).

The second side of paragraph that Quirk et al. (1985:1445) deal with is to consider the paragraph as one of the connective devices that connect or link parts of a text. They even remark that paragraphing makes punct. to have for the study of texts than for linguistics as a whole (ibid.).

Gowers (1973:256) states that the paragraph is essentially a unit of thought, not of length; the text loses all points if the paragraphs are excessively long. Carey (1960:89) sees that a pointless profusion of paragraphs is irritating as their absence, both are forbidden. Thus, the soundest policy is to aim at happy meaning (ibid.:93).

Partridge (1964) admires the definition of Alexander Bain, a philosopher and a rhetorician. Bain defines the paragraph as "a series of sentences – or perhaps only one sentence – informed and unified by a single purpose." (ibid.:167) Partridge (ibid.) suggests a hierarchy that illustrates the relative value of the paragraph:

- Complete book,
- Chapter,
- Section
- Paragraph, and
- Sentence.

Gowers (1973:258) points out that every paragraph must be homogeneous in subject-matter, and sequential in treatment.

Quirk et al. (1985:1445) say that "written texts may be in volumes, parts, chapters, sections, and few are so short as not to comprise more than one paragraph". They see that imposing paragraph boundaries is by no means self-evident or unequivocal; hence, "a paragraph has on the one hand a relatively strong sense of internal coherence and on the other a relatively loose linkage with textual material before and after it."(Ibid.).

One last point, which needs to be mentioned here, is that referred to at the beginning of this section, viz. the relation between paragraphing and quot. marks. Partridge (ibid.:170) says that they are two practices with one feature. "One practice is to begin and end every paragraph with quot. mark(s); the other is to omit them from the end (but not from the beginning) of all but the last."(Ibid.)

6. Heavy and Light Punctuation

Partridge (1964:94) mentions other names of heavy and light punctuation, i.e. over stopping and under stopping, as well as close and open punct. (rather American).

Partridge (1964:94) contrasts those who call for light punct., since the heavy punct. is being checked the reader like a horse with a fidgety driver. He says that "better a slight irritation than the grave doubt which often results from the ambiguity caused by under stopping."(Ibid.)

That is usually happened with correlative commas, which comes to mark off additional phrase or clause (see Vallins, 1951:106). But, in Quirk et al.'s (1985:1632) example, *He smiled at Joan, and Mary, seeing this, was cross,* heavy punctuation is necessary; consider the same sentence with light punctuation: *He smiled at Joan and Mary , seeing this, was cross.* They comment that when the reader reads the second example, it would make him think at first that *and* was coordinating two names rather than two clauses.

Accordingly, Carey (1960:125) says that in the realm of the "discretionary comma" there are two tendencies, which he considers them indiscretions. The first involves too many commas, and the second too few commas (ibid.). However, he concludes that the context only decides such commas (ibid.:126).

Partridge (1964:97) refers to the inserting of a comma or commas to set off the adverb, or adverbial phrase from the following words that it qualifies. He says that in general the adverbials coming at the beginning of the sentence, as *in the March, before 1914, lastly,* needno comma after themjust for emphasis, or it may be required stylistically; but neither syntax, nor logic demand this comma (ibid.:98).

Furthermore, he turns to say that some adverbials require the comma to come after them that is to distinguish them from conjunction, as with *now* in the following sentences (ibid.):

(a) *Now* I think of it, he did act suspiciously. [*At this time*]

(b) *Now*, if you think of it , he did act suspiciously. [*At thattime*]

Quirk et al. (1985:1631) see that the principle that is related to the heavy and light punct. is that "punctuation should not work against the hierarchy of grammatical units"[(21)];e.g. *Slowly, he strolled over and she smiled at him.* They comment that *slowly* applies nonsensically to both clauses. If the writer wants this adverbial applying to the first clause, he must add a comma before *and*, or insert a comma at the higher constituent boundary: *Slowly he strolled over, and she smiled at him;* a third choice,the comma (or commas) is omitted entirely (ibid.).

They remark that the first choice of heavy punct. is to preserve a consistent and logical ordering of hierarchical relationships. However, writers move towards light punct., justifying that in saying that their sentences would be quickly and easily understood.

To conclude, Partridge (1964:103) states that "the exact amount of punct. depends upon both the subject and the manner". Nonetheless,

Whatever the manner, whatever the subject, whatever the amount, punctuation is important. … It is obviously far more important than spelling; yet it receives much less attention, perhaps because it is much more difficult (ibid.).

Notes

1) Lowth (cited in Vallins, 1956:152) "gives the traditional division of **the sentence** as standardized by the rhetoricians, relating it to the functions and names of the four stops": the period, the colon, the semicolon, and the sentence; the period is "the whole sentence, complete in itself, wanting nothing to make a full and perfect sense, and not connected in construction with a subsequent sentence". The period has a different meaning in acoustic phonetics (see Crystal, 1997 s.v. *period(ic)*:284).
2) raditionally, a sentence is the expression of a complete thought (Palmer, 1971:71).
3) In traditional grammar sentences are classified in two ways: functionally, as statements, questions, exclamations, and commands; and structurally, as simple and compound (Lyons, 1968:180) (see Crystal, 1997 s.v. *sentence*:347).
4) Declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative are formal classification of the type of sentences (Crystal, 1997 s.v. *sentence*:347).
5) Gowers (1973:262) dedicates an independent section for *sentence*, saying that many grammarians have defined it, but the closest definition to punctuation is what ***Oxford English Dictionary*** (1989 s.v. *sentence:*16:991) calls it 'the popular one': "Such a portion of a composition or utterance as extends from one full stop to another."
6) Lyons (1968:174) states that what are traditionally called 'incomplete' or 'elliptical' sentences may be grammatically incomplete, but contextually they are complete. Sweet (1968:157) says that in some cases a complete meaning is expressed by a single word – a "sentence-word" such as *come!* which means 'I command you to come'; however, from the grammatical point of view, these *condensed sentences* are hardly sentences at all; they are intermediate between a word and a sentence. Jespersen (1976:105) calls them *amorphoussentences* that are more suitable for the emotional side of human nature than sentences of complete predicational nexuses that are often intellectual and formal so as to satisfy the strict requirements of logicians.
7) This is formed after the well-known English proverb: "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves."(Carey, 1960:38)
8) Context…is that which occurs before and/or after a word, a phrase, or even a longer utterance or a text; it helps in understanding the particular meaning of the word, the phrase, etc. (***Dictionary of Applied Linguistics,*** 1985s.v. *context*: 61).
9) Coordination is the join of units of the same rank, like subordination, but the difference lies in that the units in the first are constituents at the same level of constituent structure, whereas in the second they form a hierarchy: a subordinate unit is a constituent of a superordinate unit (Quirk et al., 1985:918).
10) Appositive is a word or construction that refers to the same thing as another and is usually set immediately after it (Kane, 1983:638).
11) A complex sentence consists of only one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses that function as elements of a sentence (Quirk et al., 1985:987).
12) There are four categories of the grammatical function of adverbials: adjunct, subjunctive, disjunct, and conjunct (Quirk et al, 1985:501).
13) "Disjuncts … have a superior role as compared with the sentence elements (subject, object , and complement); they are syntactically more detached and in some respects 'superordinate', in that they seem to have a scope that extends over the sentence as a whole."(Quirk et al., 1985: 613)
14) Quirk et al. (1985:632n.) state that disjunct and conjunct are sometimes called 'sentence adverbials', depending on double grounds: they can concern a sentence as a whole and – in case of conjuncts – can relate one sentence to another. But they do not follow this convention because, first, other adverbials [sentence adjunct, e.g. 'On the platform, she kiss her mother' (ibid.:512)] can be related to the sentence as a whole; second, both disjuncts and conjuncts can also related to quite specific units within a sentence, as in: 'I object to his hearty and, frankly (or above all), crude behavior'. Third, conjuncts can relate units much larger than a sentence as *nonetheless* at the beginning of a paragraph or a section of a text, which indicates a conjoining contrast with the whole preceding paragraph or section.
15) Absolute clauses are "nonfinite and verbless adverbial clauses" that have an overt subject, but they are not introduced by a subordinator and are not the complement of a preposition (Quirk et al., 1985:1120).
16) In fact, up to the end of the eighteenth century the relative clause is normally separated from the main clause by a comma without distinguishing between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses (Vallins,1951:155).

17) "Vocative is an optional element, usually a noun phrase, denoting the one or more persons to whom the sentence is addressed"; it may take initial, medial, or final position in the sentence (Quirk et al.,1985:773).
18) "A compound sentence consists of two or more coordinated main clauses; the clauses of a compound sentence provide classic instances of a paratactic relationship."(Quirk et al.,1985:987) So the compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses (Sledd,1959:175).
19) The conjuncts semantic classes, as Quirk et al.(1985:634) classify, are (a) a summative (e.g. then, therefore, all in all, to conclude, etc.); (b) a listing (e.g. first, second, first of all, etc.); (c) appositive (e.g. for example, that is, etc.); (d) resultive (e.g. accordingly, hence, now, etc.); (e) inferential (e.g. otherwise, in other words, etc.); (f) contrastive (e.g. rather, more precisely, alternatively, etc.).
20) It is "a syntactical clause inserted into a sentence, modifying a particular part of the sentence without adding to or changing its basic structure." (Hartman and Stork, 1972s.v. *Parenthetical clause:* 163).
21) The grammatical hierarchy consists off highest units and lowest units; the highest units are sentences, clauses, phrases, and words; whereas the lowest units are morphemes (Quirk et al., 1985:42-43).

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