

## The Role of Punctuation In Clarifying Written Communication

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### Abstrak

Studi ini menyelidiki peran penting tanda baca dalam meningkatkan kejelasan dan efektivitas komunikasi tertulis. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan berbasis survei untuk mengumpulkan data dari partisipan mengenai persepsi dan pemahaman mereka tentang tanda baca dalam berbagai konteks tertulis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar peserta (80%) menyadari pentingnya tanda baca dalam memahami konten tertulis, sementara 85% melaporkan mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami karena tanda baca yang salah atau hilang. Hasilnya lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa tanda baca sangat penting untuk menjalin hubungan antarkalimat, terutama dalam teks yang lebih panjang, dan 80% responden menegaskan pentingnya tanda baca dalam konteks tersebut. Selain itu, 50% peserta mengaku sengaja menambahkan tanda baca untuk memastikan tulisannya dipahami dengan benar. Studi ini menekankan perlunya penulis untuk mengembangkan pemahaman yang kuat tentang aturan tanda baca, menganjurkan kesadaran dan pendidikan yang lebih besar mengenai keterampilan dasar ini untuk meningkatkan kejelasan dan kualitas wacana tertulis. Pada akhirnya, tanda baca yang efektif berfungsi sebagai jembatan antara pesan penulis dan pemahaman pembaca, menjadikannya elemen penting dalam seni menulis.

**Kata kunci:** *Tanda Baca, Komunikasi Tertulis, Pemahaman Pembaca, Penelitian Survei, Kejelasan*

### Abstract

This study investigates the important role of punctuation in enhancing the clarity and effectiveness of written communication. Utilizing a quantitative research design, this study employed a survey-based approach to collect data from participants regarding their perceptions and understanding of punctuation in various written contexts. Findings revealed that a significant majority of participants (80%) recognized the importance of punctuation in understanding written content, while 85% reported experiencing difficulties in understanding due to incorrect or missing punctuation marks. The results further show that punctuation is essential for establishing relationships between sentences, especially in longer texts, with 80% of respondents affirming its importance in such contexts. In addition, 50% of participants admitted to adding punctuation marks on purpose to ensure their writing was understood correctly. The study emphasizes the need for writers to develop a solid understanding of punctuation rules, advocating for greater awareness and education on this basic skill to improve the clarity and quality of written discourse. Ultimately, effective punctuation serves as a bridge between the writer's message and the reader's understanding, making it an essential element in the art of writing.

**Keywords:** *Punctuation, Written Communication, Reader Comprehension, Survey Research, Clarity*

### INTRODUCTION

The traditional legality characteristic of punctuation marks in various systematic languages mainly creates the need to advance the criterion of marking in the development of the principles of systematic regulation of the writer's use of punctuation marks in the process of text creation. It is also necessary to take into account the functions of punctuation marks in the process of communicative communication of a speaker or writer. In the process of communication or reading,

the writer and the reader express themselves based on their basic knowledge of punctuation. At the same time, codified rules of punctuation help to understand the meaning of the text correctly, while those used inconsistently with the rules hinder the understanding of adequate meaning. However, without clarifying the attitude of the reader, it is completely wrong to talk about the mutual understanding of the participants of written communication, especially the functions of punctuation marks that serve to clarify this issue. Although many studies are devoted to the study of oral speech, the issue of its expression in writing remains neglected.

Although speech is oral, its analysis is carried out through a written text. In the analysis of the use of punctuation marks in the actual process of written communication, taking into account the communicative interaction between the human factor, that is, the writer and the reader, makes it possible to determine the expression of punctuation marks. In contrast to the expression of ideas in writing, the use of punctuation marks in accordance with the norm to express the communicative purpose and, on the other hand, the use of the same meaning by the writer and the reader, helps to adequately understand the content of the written text. It shows the social essence of the punctuation marks, which are coordinated in terms of their stability and norm to the signs with a common task and meaning in the expression of the written text. In contrast to the expression of ideas in writing, the use of punctuation marks in accordance with the norm to express the communicative purpose and, on the other hand, the use of the same meaning by the writer and the reader, helps to adequately understand the content of the written text. It shows the social essence of the punctuation marks, which are coordinated in terms of their stability and norm to the signs with a common task and meaning in the expression of the written text.

The importance of punctuation in written communication can be seen in its impact on the reader's interpretation of a text. For example, a sentence such as "Let's eat, Grandma!" compared to "Let's eat Grandma!" illustrates how a simple comma can drastically alter the meaning, turning a plea to avoid cannibalism into a casual dinner invitation (Truss, 2003). Moreover, punctuation marks such as periods, commas, semicolons, and quotation marks help establish relationships between ideas, show pauses, indicate questions, or highlight direct speech (Barton, 2012). As we explore further, it becomes clear that punctuation does more than just separate ideas; it creates a framework within which meaning is made clear and accessible to readers. Therefore, an understanding of punctuation and its correct application is indispensable for effective written communication, both in academic writing and everyday use.

## **METHOD**

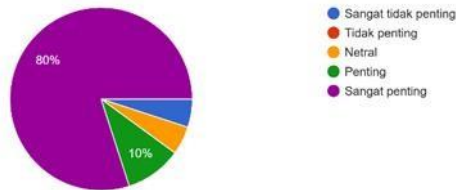
This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of punctuation on the clarity of written communication. A survey-based approach will be utilized to collect data from participants regarding their perceptions and understanding of punctuation in various written contexts. The researcher used quantitative methods, specifically survey research. According to John W. Creswell (2012), survey research is a quantitative research process that measures the attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, or characteristics of a population.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics will be calculated to summarize demographic information and participants' responses. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVA, will be employed to examine differences in punctuation understanding and perceived clarity across different demographic groups. Correlation analysis will also be conducted to explore the relationship between punctuation usage and perceived clarity in written communication.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Statement 1

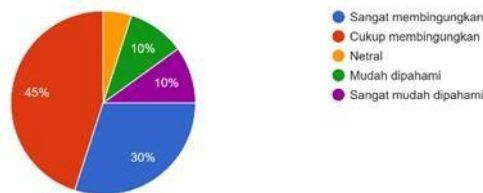
Seberapa pentingkah Anda menurut Anda tanda baca dalam memahami sebuah teks?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that the use of punctuation in understanding a text is very important (80%).

### Statement 2

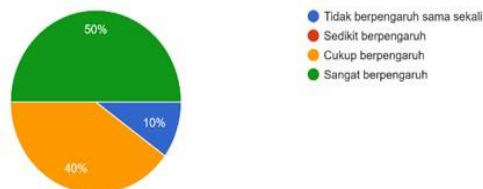
Bagaimana pendapat Anda mengenai teks tanpa tanda baca yang jelas?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that the use of text without punctuation is quite confusing (45%).

### Statement 3

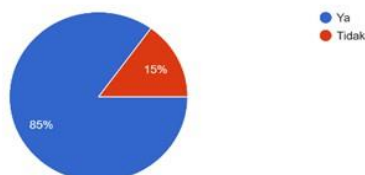
Menurut Anda, seberapa besar pengaruh tanda baca yang benar terhadap kejelasan makna sebuah kalimat?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that the influence of correct punctuation on the clarity of the meaning of a sentence is very influential (50%).

### Statement 4

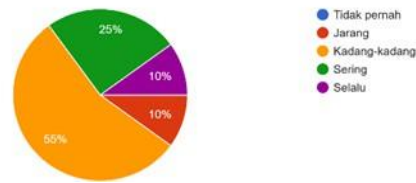
Apakah Anda pernah merasa kesulitan memahami teks karena tanda baca yang salah atau hilang?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that there is 85% difficulty in understanding the text due to incorrect or missing punctuation.

### Statement 5

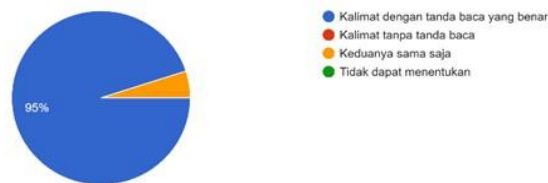
Dalam hal membaca artikel atau cerita, seberapa sering Anda memperhatikan tanda baca?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that when reading articles or stories, 55% of people pay attention to punctuation.

### Statement 6

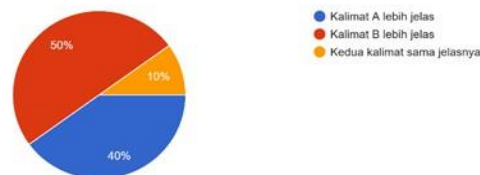
Jika Anda diberikan dua kalimat yang sama, satu dengan tanda baca yang benar dan satu tanpa tanda baca, mana yang lebih mudah Anda pahami?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that, if there are two identical sentences, one with correct punctuation and one without punctuation, 95% of respondents find it easier to understand.

### Statement 7

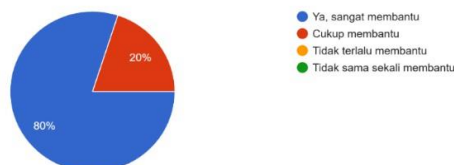
Berikut adalah dua kalimat yang hampir identik, namun memiliki tanda baca yang berbeda. Mana yang Anda anggap lebih jelas? Kalimat A (dengan t...da baca yang benar): "Mari kita makan anak-anak!"  
20 jawaban



The results above show that there are two sentences that are almost the same but have different punctuation. So there are 50% of respondents who understand the punctuation in the sentence.

### Statement 8

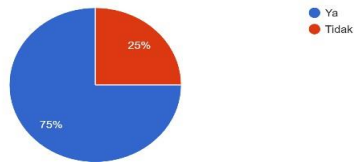
Dalam bacaan yang lebih panjang (misalnya, artikel atau cerita), apakah Anda merasa tanda baca membantu Anda memahami hubungan antar kalimat atau paragraf?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that in longer readings such as articles or stories, 80% of respondents felt that punctuation helped understand the relationships between sentences.

### Statement 9

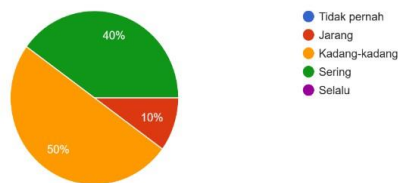
Apakah Anda pernah mengubah makna atau interpretasi dari sebuah kalimat hanya karena tanda baca yang digunakan?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that 75% of respondents have changed the meaning of a sentence just because of the punctuation used.

### Statement 10

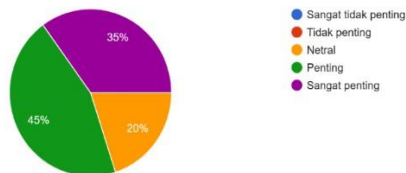
Seberapa sering Anda merasa perlu menambahkan tanda baca ketika menulis sesuatu untuk memastikan pembaca memahaminya dengan benar?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that 50% of respondents added punctuation when writing something to ensure that readers understood it correctly.

### Statement 11

Secara keseluruhan, bagaimana Anda menilai peran tanda baca dalam memperjelas komunikasi tertulis?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that 45% of respondents considered the role of punctuation in clarifying written communication.

### Statement 12

Apakah menurut Anda penggunaan tanda baca yang benar bisa mencegah kesalahpahaman dalam komunikasi tertulis?  
20 jawaban



The results above show that 70% of respondents believe that the use of correct punctuation can prevent misunderstandings in written communication.

## Discussion

In a text the use of punctuation is very influential in clarifying written communication. Punctuation plays an important role in understanding written communication, as it helps structure sentences, clarify meaning, and guide the reader's interpretation. With punctuation, it will make it easier for someone to understand what he or she is reading. Without proper punctuation, the message conveyed by the writer can easily become ambiguous or misleading. As an example of the above results consider the difference between "Let's eat, children" and "Let's eat children." The use of commas in the first sentence creates a clear distinction, while the second sentence, which does not use commas, suggests something completely different and nonsensical. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation marks help define sentence boundaries, indicate pauses, and express the tone or emotion behind a message. In addition, punctuation helps in showing connections between ideas and organizing complex thoughts into more digestible segments. Effective use of punctuation improves readability and ensures that the author's intent is communicated accurately and efficiently. As a result, punctuation is not just a set of rules, but an essential tool for clarity in written communication, making it crucial for the reader to interpret the message correctly.

Punctuations are symbols that are used to make written language more comprehensible and clearer. The error of the use of Punctuation and bibliography. The English punctuation is a component of writing. It is very important for the people who want to write. Wrote punctuation marks are symbols that represent the structure and order of written text, as well as intonation and pauses that should be observed when reading aloud (Shweba& Mujiyanto, 2017).

There are several types of punctuation, they are: 1) Full Stop/Periods (.) to signal the end of a declarative phrase. It also serves other purposes besides being a sign, 2) Commas (,), to signal list of nouns, used in quotation, and used before a coordinating conjunction, 3) Semicolons (;), like commas, it indicates an audible pause that is a little longer than a comma but not quite a full stop, 4) Colons (:), used to separate hours and minutes and to separate a title from subtitle the punctuation mark known as a colon serves a variety of purposes, 5) Quotation Marks (" ") commonly used in direct speech, 6) Parentheses (( )) is used to enclose an interrupting word or word group that adds information and to clarify an idea, 7) Brackets ([ ]), Brackets are only used in specific situations. Only within quoted material are brackets (like single quotation marks) used. Parentheses are used much more frequently than brackets, 8) Apostrophes (') is used for contractions and possession, 9) Hyphens (-) to divide a word that is too long to fit on one line; to separate syllables of words to illustrate pronunciation; and as a leader in tabular work. 10) Dashes (—) is used to show a break in thought in a sentence, to summarize or provide information, or a sudden stops in speech, 11) Ellipses (...), to indicate an omission of a word or words within a sentence, to show that the speaker has been interrupted, and to indicate a trailing off in speech or thought, 12) Question Marks (?) is used after a direct question, 13) Exclamation Marks (!), the exclamation mark denotes a strong emotional response, 14) Slash (/) to express alternatives and indicates when a unit of one physical quantity is divided into units of another physical quantity, e.g. m/s. Punctuation has three important functions

1. **Phonetic Function:** this is very important, since punctuation marks show clearly the rhythm, pauses, and tone inflexions in a written document; a written document has a tone. Many times the tone is ignored, and the readers are free to interpret the tone the way they want/feel/ (like it): that may lead to confusing situations, and it is worse than grammatical mistakes. The tone is controlled by commas, semicolons, colons, points of ellipsis, etc. (Connelly, 2005). In this regard, they are like traffic lights telling us to slow down and stop. They make clear thought. Punctuation is an occupational hazard for almost any teacher, as hundreds of hours are given over correcting the vagrant punctuation of student.
2. **Grammatical Function:** punctuation is used in direct style: to form interrogations; to mark emphatic content; to highlight syntactic elements displaced from their natural positions; and to build the structure of the sentences, complex sentences, paragraphs, documents, etc.
3. **Semantic Function:** punctuation helps learners understand the meaning of particular words/phrases by marking/highlighting them differently than normal text, using italics, underlining, bolds, capitals, etc. In a short apposition, one could use commas to isolate it or



not. Long appositions are always isolated by a pair of commas. Further, commas are needed almost in all instances when we have nominative of address (Rumki, 2005) In this respect, they are as essential to good composition as nails are to a carpenter (Lukeman, 2006). Wrong punctuation can interrupt the flow of ideas and change meaning, but properly used punctuation not only helps readers understand your meaning but also makes them engrossed in one's writing. (Rumki, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

The study presented in this journal highlights the critical importance of punctuation in enhancing the clarity and effectiveness of written communication. The research underscores that a proper understanding and application of punctuation are indispensable for effective communication, both in academic writing and everyday use. The survey results indicate that 80% of participants recognize the importance of punctuation in understanding written content, while 85% reported difficulties in comprehension due to incorrect or missing punctuation.

The findings of this journal emphasize that punctuation is an essential aspect of written communication that cannot be overlooked. Proper punctuation not only enhances readability but also ensures that the author's intent is communicated effectively. As such, it is imperative for writers to develop a strong understanding of punctuation rules and their applications to facilitate clear and effective communication. The study advocates for greater awareness and education regarding the role of punctuation in writing, as it is a fundamental skill that contributes significantly to the clarity and quality of written discourse. Ultimately, the effective use of punctuation is crucial in bridging the gap between the writer's message and the reader's understanding, making it a vital element in the art of writing.

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