

Punctuation errors made by Russian-speaking students in English texts

Alsu Mullina*

National Research Ogarev Mordovia State University
Saransk, Russian Federation

Nowadays, the main goal of teaching foreign languages in schools is to shape students' communicative competence. Due to the fact that the ability to compose a written statement in accordance with the requirements and norms of the foreign language is one of the crucial indicators of mastering this type of competence, teaching writing becomes of particular importance.

For the time being, there are various methods of teaching writing in a foreign language. However, writing papers in English still causes certain difficulties for Russian speakers. Moreover, the reasons of appearance of the errors and the complexity of their eradication has not been adequately exposed yet. These facts explain the relevance of the study conducted.

In the course of the study, we analyzed the papers written in English by the students of National Research Ogarev Mordovia State University's lycée in the age group 16-18. The results were further analyzed in order to identify the areas where the greatest number of mistakes was found. A total number of the material used for the research is 22 papers. Based on the results of the analysis, we came to the conclusion that one of the most problematic areas for Russian-speaking students when writing texts in English lies in punctuation. The difficulties in this area are caused primarily by differences in the punctuation systems of the Russian and English languages. The most common errors include:

- 1) omission of the apostrophe in phrases expressing belonging;
- 2) omitting a serial comma;
- 3) the absence of a comma between extended simple clauses as parts of a compound sentence;
- 4) putting a comma before the conjunction "that" in compound sentences;
- 5) errors in marking by commas defining and non-defining relative clauses;
- 6) the omission of a comma after the adverbial modifier of place and time at the beginning of simple sentences;
- 7) marking participial clause by commas;
- 8) marking the form of address at the beginning of the letter with an exclamation mark, or omitting any punctuation mark in this position.

Thus, in the punctuation systems of Russian and English, there is a large number of differences, which often lead to students making mistakes in writing. Such discrepancies include the presence of such a punctuation mark as apostrophe in English and its absence in Russian, as well as the different use of such a punctuation mark as a comma in these languages.

Key words: punctuation, writing, teaching foreign languages, errors, apostrophe, comma, compound sentence, simple sentence, clause.

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* 1st year master degree student, alsumullina@gmail.com