Abstract

The reforms in the higher education in the Republic of Macedonia point out the students’ written expression. As members of the academic community and bearer of the society progress, students should beware of their written expression, primarily because they cultivate their language expression and contribute for protecting and strengthening the stability of the language norm. The punctual and orthographic marks have treatment as something secondary and they do not have the prominence they deserve. Yet they have relevant role in forming the text according to the orthographic norm. Thus, the paper examines the use of the punctual and orthographic mark colon. The research has qualitative paradigm (analysis of content) and descriptive design. The sample consist of written texts that refer to the colon in the Curriculum and the Textbooks for teaching the Macedonian language from first to ninth grade of the primary school and texts from first to fourth year of the secondary vocational and gymnasium education. The sample also comprises 100 written texts from students from first to fourth year that are studying on the Faculty of Education in Bitola. The data are excerpt from the materials that present the sample. The methods for processing the data are analysis, synthesis and comparison. The results of the research indicate that there is a need of revision of the Curriculum and the Textbooks, and a need for actualization of the correct use of this mark among the students in order to improve their written expression in accordance with the language norm.

Key words: correct use of the colon

INTRODUCTION

The punctual and orthographic marks have an important role in the correct forming of the written text as well as for its coherence. Besides, they help the flow of the thoughts, clarity of the expression, and separation of the paragraphs that text consists of. This, on the other side, guarantees that the text will follow the standard language norm that will lead to its nourishment and affirmation. These marks have treatment as something that is not relevant and they do not get the prominence they deserve. Therefore, the paper examines the use of the colon as punctual and orthographic mark and increases the students’ consciousness for the need of cultivating their own expression and protecting and firming the stability of the standard language norm. This need is more relevant, when one knows that the Orthography of the Macedonian language clearly regulates the use of this mark as punctual and orthographic one and that the orthographic rules for its use are explicit without the possibility for dual interpretation.
BACKGROUND RESEARCH

In the Macedonian linguistics, the number of the papers, which concern various aspects of the correct orthographic formation of the written text, is large. In continuance, there is a review of some newest research. The negative practice of deviation of the norm is seen by Ristovski in Davkova-Gjorgjieva (2011, p. 236). He indicates this apparent process of decomposition of the Macedonian language and states that as users of the language we cannot and may not reconcile with some deviant language and orthographic phenomena in the society, that have taken roots in the public speech. Ristovski suggests the need of new activation of the professional community, i.e. the need of forming one official state Orthographic commission, which would permanently follow the development of the standard, notice the deviation and propose new solutions. Taseska (2012), in her master thesis shows that the type and the number of the orthographic mistakes in the students’ written expression are determined from their age and the overall success. She concludes that the students from primary school do not know to implement the double quotation marks and they omit them in text given in a direct speech. Janusheva and Jurukovska (2015, pp. 267–282), show that there are many dilemmas regarding the orthography of the capital and small letter in terms for the area of education and suggest some possible solutions. Janusheva and Jurukovska (2016, p. 236–244), stress out the differentiation between the punctual and orthographic marks and show that the Macedonian language Curriculum and Textbooks in the primary education are full of wrong information regarding this differentiation. Jurukovska (2016), examines written material from the four functional styles in the Macedonian language and points out the wrong usage of the dash and the hyphen. She interferes that the incorrect models may contribute for adoption of their wrong orthography in the written practice. Janusheva and Pejchinovska (2016, pp. 112–119) highlight numerous weaknesses in the students’ written practice regarding an essay and promote the role of teaching on how the essay should be written. Janusheva and Jurukovska (2017a, pp. 1–21) elaborate the orthographic rules regarding the compound nouns and indicate the implication in the teaching process as a result of their unclearness and possibility for double interpretation. Janusheva and Jurukovska (2017b, pp. 1–16) interpret the written practice in the journalistic sub-style regarding the orthography of the hyphenated compound nouns and notice many deviations from the Orthography, primarily due to using same explanations for various rules. Janusheva (2017, pp. 15–28) explores the presence of the double quotation marks in the Macedonian language Curriculum and Textbooks in the primary and secondary education. She shows that there are countless wrong examples regarding the use of this mark that primarily refer to the content of the orthographic rules and especially to the influence of the English language. This review shows that in the Macedonian language many deviations from the standard norm are present and that this is a serious question. The research indicates that the colon does not get the needed attention, thus it increases the relevance and the actuality of the chosen topic. The topic contributes the increasing of the Macedonian speakers’ consciousness to respect and keep the standard language norm.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research has qualitative paradigm (analysis of content) and descriptive design. The sample comprises of the Macedonian language Curriculum and Textbooks in the primary and secondary school, as well as written material from 100 students that are studying at the Faculty of Education in Bitola. The data for the usage of the colon are excerpts from the sample. The students belong to different dialectological areas, i.e. this means that their written material reflects the written practice in the Republic of Macedonia. The students’
written material represents, in fact, a short text prepared by the teacher and it contains five orthographic rules from the Orthography of the Macedonian language (2015, p. 115–116, 137). The students have to put the colon on 9 places. The teacher reads the text to the students and asks them to write it. In the same time, he stresses out that the students have to bear in mind the use of the punctual and orthographic rules, without naming the marks, which they have to use. Then, besides the analysis of the Macedonian language Curriculum and Textbook, the teacher analyses the use of the colon in the text regarding whether the students identify the places where the colon should be. This means that the teacher examines the students’ knowledge for the orthographic rules that refer to this mark. In processing the data, we exploit also synthesis and comparison. What follows is the text prepared by the teacher:

Djenova go pobedi Inter so 3 : 2 [Genoa has won Inter 3 : 2]; Manifestacijata kje pochne vo 9:00 chasot [The manifestation will start at 9:00]; Manifestacijata e poddrzhana od: Ministerstvoto za kultura na R Makedonija, Sovetot na Evropa i UNESKO [The manifestation is supported by the Ministry of culture, the Council of Europe and UNESCO]; Idejnoto reshenie na manifestacijata e na avtorite: Petar Trajkovski, Milosh Kalajdziev i Elena Josifovska [The conceptual solution of the manifestation is from the authors Petar Trajkovski, Milosh Kalajdziev and Elena Josifovska]; Tie baraat rokovi do koi bi se donele nekoi zakoni, na primer: za jazicite, balansirano vladeenje i otvoranje na temata za redefiniranje na drzhavata [They ask for deadlines for some new laws, for example, the law for the languages, balanced governing and opening the topic for redefining of the state]; Poedinci kako: Sokrat, Leonardo da Vinchi, Isaak Njutn i Albert Ajnshtajn imale revolucionerni idei [Individuals like Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein have revolutionary ideas]; Andreevski e eden od najpoznatite makedonski pisateli. Negovi poznachajni dela se: “Pirej”, “Poslednite selani”, Nebeska Timjanovna” i dr. [Andreevski is one of the famous Macedonian writer. His most known novels are …]; Vo prvite pet zemji spored ovoj indeks se naogjaat: Island, Shvedska, Singapur i Avstralija [The first five countries, according to this index are Island, Sweden, Singapore and Australia]; Tie mozhe da smetaat na tri ministerski mesta, i toa: vo ministerstvoto za finansii, vnatreshni raboti i obrazovanje [They can count on three ministry places, like in the ministry for finance, internal affair and education].

RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

In continuance the results and the discussion are given.

The Macedonian language Curriculum for the first, second and third grade in the primary school, consist of insignificant small number of content dedicated to the colon. The students introduce the colon as an orthographic mark in the third grade of the primary education. The Curriculum proposes exercises for recognition and implementation of this mark (Curriculum, 2007 a, b, c). Taking into account that the students in the first developmental period often forms short sentences which comprise the use of the colon, it is a surprise why the colon as punctual mark used for enumerating (Orthography, 2015, p. 115, p. 266) is not introduced in second grade. In the Curriculum for fourth, fifth and sixth grade in the primary education, the colon are present in the sixth grade (Curriculum, 2009 a; Curriculum, V and Curriculum VI, p. 10). The use of this mark as punctual or orthographic is not précised. Yet, the part of the Curriculum that refers to the use of the marks for direct speech indicates the use of the colon as punctual mark, when it is about a direct speech. Bearing in mind that in this developmental period students use sentences, which comprise enumeration, again, it is a surprise why the fourth and the fifth grade do not have content for the colon when the Curriculum for sixth grade refers to its more complex usage. In the Curriculum for the third developmental period (the seventh, eighth and ninth grade) content dedicated to the use of the colon are not present.
The ninth grade promotes the difference between the punctual and orthographic marks, but there is no further information (Curriculum, 2008 a, pp. 5–9; 2008 b, pp. 4–8; 2009 b, pp. 5–8). The Macedonian language Curriculum for the secondary vocational education with three and four year, should in fact follow the previously learned content, to deepened and extend them. In this sense, the Curriculum for first year of the three-year education stresses out the difference between punctual and orthographic marks and the colon are present among other marks. The Curriculum suggests exercises for implementation of the already learned orthographic rules for punctual and orthographic marks and written texts for illustration of their correct and incorrect use (Curriculum, 2013 a; 2013 b; 2013 c). In the Curriculum for second, third and the fourth year of the secondary three-year education there are no content dedicated to this mark. The Curriculum for the four-year education is identical with the one for the three-year education (Curriculum, 2005, p. 10; 2006, pp. 5–12; 2007, pp. 4–9; 2008 c, pp. 7–10). According to this, the Curriculum for the three and four-year of the secondary education follows the Curriculum in the primary school with only one rule, which is not enough for the students to adopt the correct use of this mark. It is odd that the other three years of education do not contain contents dedicated to the colon. The Curriculum for gymnasium education is identical with the Curriculum for the four-year vocational education. It shows the same rule only in the first grade, and other grades do not contain any rules for the use of the colon (Curriculum, 2001, pp. 4–9; 2002 a, pp. 4–10; 2002 b, pp. 4–12; 2002 c, pp. 4–15). Therefore, the conclusion from this part is that the Curriculum for primary and secondary education proposes a small number of content for the use of the colon and it refers only to two rules for their usage.

The Macedonian language textbook usually follows the direction given in the Curriculum. Therefore, one expects the Textbooks to follow these directions and to elaborate the proposed content. The textbooks for the first developmental period are not available on the web site of the portal e-textbooks, because they protect themselves with copyright, so they are not part of the elaboration. In accordance with the Curriculum, the content for the colon should appear in the third grade. The Textbooks for the second developmental period are in accordance to the Curriculum. In the fourth grade, within the rules for the double quotation marks, there is a rule, which explains their use when citing thoughts and words. The example shows that in front of the quotation marks, there is a colon and this is in accordance with the rule for using the colon before the words that present the direct speech (Orthography, 2015, p. 117, pt. 272). However, the textbook does not mention this use of the colon (Svdinska, Nastoska, 2009 a, p. 145). The textbook by Krtolica, Mitovska and Gavrilovska-Avramovska (p. 47) provides the same explanation as the previous textbook, but there is a lack of examples. Yet, within the rules for the orthography of the double quotation marks, there is an example. This example clearly indicates the use of the colon when students enumerate journals appropriate to their age and this is in accordance with the Orthography (2015, p. 115, pt. 226). In the textbook by Atanasova (2009, p. 164) again there are content for the use of the quotation marks without an example. Thus, in the textbooks for the fourth grade there is a use of the colon in the examples within the use of the double quotation marks, yet, they do not mention the colon explicitly. It is most important to stress out that the basic rule for using the colon for enumeration is not present in these textbooks, though they provide examples for it. The textbook for fifth grade, within the content for the use of the quotation marks in direct and indirect speech, asks the students to be aware of the use of the colon in the direct speech. However, the textbook does not provide the basic rule that regulates this use of the colon (Svdinska, Nastoska, 2010, pp. 116–117). Accordingly, the question about what would the students be aware of when there is not an explanation that in direct speech in front of the quotation marks they should use the colon, arises. The textbook for sixth grade for the first time mentions three concrete rules for the use of the colon. The first rule regulates the use of
the colon when enumerating. The second rule concerns the use of the colon when citing words that are not ours. These rules are in accordance with the Macedonian orthography. Appropriate examples accompany the rules (Velkovska, Jovanovska, 2011, p. 36). The third rule regulates the use of the colon after sentence after which another sentence or sentences follow in order to explain the first sentence. This rule is neither clear nor precise. Yet, it is obvious that the textbook for sixth grade for the first time mentions the use of the colon explicitly, though the textbooks for the fourth and fifth grade pay attention to the more complex use of the colon. Therefore, it is unclear why the textbooks introduce the basic rule for the use of the colon in sixth grade. As for the situation in seventh grade, the textbook by Velkova, Jovanovska (2009, pp. 122–124) does not mention the colon at all. There is only one assignment and the students should use all of the learned marks, and one can only assume that this assignment should cover the use of the colon. The second textbook for the seventh grade does not mention the use of the colon. The textbooks for eighth grade also do not mention the use of the colon (Velkova, Jovanovska, VII; Bojkovska, Aleksova, Pandev, Gochkova, 2009; Bogdanovski, VII). The textbook for ninth grade again does not mention the use of the colon (Velkova, Jovanovska, 2010). From this review, it is clear that the textbooks for the third developmental period of the primary education do not contain content regarding the use of the colon and they mostly do not deviate from the Curriculum. Some of them contain clear rules for the use of the colon, but though it is obvious for the linguists that they refer to the use of the colon as punctual mark, this information lacks in all of the analyzed textbooks. Accordingly, though the Curriculum and the textbooks stress out the relevance of the difference between the punctual and the orthographic marks, the students will not gain knowledge for this relevant issue. None of the textbook mentions the use of colon as orthographic marks. The textbooks for secondary vocation education (three- and four-year) reflect the previous textbooks, especially the one for sixth grade. Instead of deepen the content for the use of the colon and to extend it with new rules, the notion of colon is present only in the textbook for first year. There is certain extension because this textbook mentions the use of the colon as punctual mark. This textbook for the first time notes the use of the colon as punctual mark to denote a relation between numbers (Tocinovski, Mladenoski, 2010 a, pp. 78–81). This rule and the examples are in accordance with the Orthography (2015, p. 137, pt. 316 b). The textbooks for second, third and fourth year of the secondary vocation education do not contain information about the use of the colon (Tocinovski, Mladenoski, 2010 a; Iliev ska, Boshkovikj, 2011 a; Iliev ska, Boshkovikj, 2011 b). The textbooks for the gymnasium education are not under analysis because on the official site they are not available. Therefore, taken into account the Curriculum for the gymnasium education we can conclude that they are identical with the ones for the vocational education.

As for the written assignment of the students, the results are more than overthrowing. 100 students are asked to write down the text that the teacher provides. These students study at the Faculty of Education in Bitola. The students have to put the colon on 9 places. The teacher stresses out that the students have to bear in mind the use of the punctual and orthographic rules, without naming the marks, which they have to use. Then, the teacher analyses the use of the colon in the text regarding whether the students identify the places where the colon should be. This means that the teacher examines the students’ knowledge for the orthographic rules that refer to this mark. The text refers to two basic rules for the use of the colon as punctual mark, and to two basic rules for the use of the colon as orthographic marks. The written text of the students indicate the following: Regarding the orthography rule that regulates the use of the colon to divide hours form minutes and minutes from seconds (Orthography, 2015, p. 137, pt. 316 a) none of the students implement the colon. The second rule for the use of the colon as orthographic mark regulates the use of the colon to denote a result expressed with number. All of the students use the colon in this example. However, the
Orthography regulates that there should be an empty space between the colon and the numbers, but none of the students respect this. It is clear that this is a result of the lack of attention to the colon in the Curriculum and textbooks, as well as in the teaching practice. The use of the colon as punctual mark comprises of two rules in the Orthography. Regarding the first basic rule that regulates the use of the colon for enumerating, the results suggest the unsatisfactory students’ competencies (Orthography, 2015, p. 115, pt. 266). None of the students respects the language norm that refers to this use. The second rule regulates the use of the colon in front of the words na primer [for example], i toa [like], kako [as] which introduce the enumeration (Orthography, 2015, p. 115, pt. 267). Again, none of the students uses the colon in these examples. The students have implemented the period and the comma, but it seems that they do not care about the colon at all.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, the inferences are more than clear and precise. Neither the Curriculum nor the textbooks provide gaining knowledge for these basic rules and this, of course, influence the student written expression regarding their use. It is obvious that the Curriculum and the textbooks for primary education introduce the use of the colon as punctual marks in sixth grade and bearing in mind that students in this age constantly use sentences, which encounter enumerating, the lack of the one basic rule for the use colon in the previous grades is a negative surprise. Moreover, this refers to the Curriculum and textbook for secondary education, which introduce also one basic rule for the implementation of the colon as orthographic mark. Taken this in account, it is obvious why the students lack competencies for the use of the colon. The only suggestion is that the authorities should give the colon the prominence it deserve in the Curriculum as well as in the textbooks and this leads to improvement of the teaching practice and the students’ written expression. The students should be more aware of the implementation of the colon and interested in cultivating and promoting their own written expression.

REFERENCES


