

Association for Written Language and Literacy
Ассоциация письменного языка и письменности
Ένωση για τη γραπτές γλώσσα και τη βασική εκπαίδευση
书面语言和识字协会
Association for Written Language and Literacy

AWLL Newsletter: Number 1: 15th November 2014

[Click on topic to navigate to relevant section; click on text of any section banner to return to content listing]

- Greetings from AWLL president, Anneke Neijt, and newsletter editor, Terry Joyce, on the launch of AWLL newsletter
- Brief report about AWLL's 9th international workshop [Lynne Cahill]
- Call for papers: Special issue of WLL [Lynne Cahill and Terry Joyce]
- Note from general editor of Written Language & Literacy [Martin Neef]
- Online Research Bibliography of Written Language & Literacy [Terry Joyce]
- Standards and changes:
 - Will the 2015 Dictionary of Dutch Spelling bring new changes? [Anneke Neijt]
- De Gruyter Open Access book series on writing systems [Terry Joyce]
- AWLL joins Facebook and Twitter!! [Lynne Cahill]
- Thought-provoking quotations and observations
- Miscellaneous matters

Greetings from AWLL president, Anneke Neijt, and newsletter editor, Terry Joyce, on the launch of AWLL newsletter

Welcome to the first AWLL newsletter!

AWLL (<http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/index.html>) seeks to advance the study of written language by facilitating communication and cooperation between researchers with diverse interests in written language and literacy. To that aim, it has organized a series of international workshops, once every two years since 1997, and collections of the workshop papers have regularly appeared as special issues of the connected journal *Written Language and Literacy* (<https://www.benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/wll>).

However, in order to facilitate even more sharing of information and research discussions between workshop gatherings, AWLL is now launching a regular newsletter, which we hope to distribute at least twice each year in mid-May and mid-November. For instance, in addition to a brief report of the recent 9th AWLL workshop, this first AWLL newsletter also includes the call for papers for the related WLL special issue. The newsletter also includes a number of sections that will hopefully become regular features of future newsletters, such as *Standards and changes*, *Thought-provoking quotations and observations*, and *Miscellaneous matters*. For example, this time,

Standards and changes informs us that a new dictionary of Dutch spelling will appear in 2015 and muses on whether there will be further changes to the Dutch writing system?

We sincerely hope that you will positively support this endeavor to help spread information about written language and literacy. And, we would especially welcome any ideas and contributions that you may have for future newsletters (please feel free to submit contributions or ideas at any time, to terry@tama.ac.jp. To allow time for final editing, however, please be sure to submit contributions by the end of April for consideration for the mid-May newsletter and by the end of October for the mid-November newsletter, respectively). The AWLL newsletters will be archived at the AWLL website.

Brief report about AWLL's 9th workshop [Lynne Cahill]

The AWLL held its 9th workshop at the University of Sussex in Brighton (UK) in September. The event was attended by around 20 people from eight different countries on four different continents. We enjoyed talks on a range of topics, around half relating to the workshop theme of "Orthographic Databases and Lexicons". We were fortunate to have a fascinating talk on the CLEARPOND database (<http://clearpond.northwestern.edu/>) by Professor Viorica Marian from Northwestern University. The workshop concluded with a discussion of possible ways in which the AWLL can facilitate the sharing of information about writing systems. The second day was held at the Keep, the centre that holds Sussex University's special collections. We were blessed with lovely weather, so many people had the chance to take a stroll along the promenade, and see Brighton's famous beach and pier. We also enjoyed a very tasty workshop dinner at Côte Brasserie.

The workshop programme with abstracts of all of the presentations is available at: <http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/workshopsMaterials/WS09-2014-Programme+Abstracts.pdf>.

Some photos of the workshop, kindly taken by Bor Hodošček, can be found at: <http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/workshopsMaterials/WS09-2014-Photos.html>.

The minutes of the AWLL business meeting, held during the workshop, are also available at: <http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/workshopsMaterials/WS09-2014-BMMinutes.pdf>.

Call for papers: Special issue of WLL [Lynne Cahill and Terry Joyce]

The Ninth Workshop on Written Language and Literacy was held in Brighton, UK in September 2014 with the theme "Orthographic Databases and Lexicons". We now invite contributions to a special issue of the *Journal of Written Language and Literacy* on this theme. Papers that address the following questions are particularly welcome.

- What kind of orthographic information is available in databases?
- In what ways can mono- and crosslingual information be incorporated?
- To what extent can rule-based information be employed in lexicons and/or databases?
- How can the relationship between orthography and phonology be represented in databases/lexicons?

- What practical purposes (e.g. computational, pedagogic, lexicographic) can be served by databases/lexicons?

Submission is not restricted to participants at the workshop. Please note, however, that, in accordance with WLL guidelines to contributors, the editorial process will include initial reviews by the guest editors (Lynne Cahill and Terry Joyce) with a particular focus on theme relevance, revisions as necessary, and peer review by two external reviewers.

Papers should follow the submission guidelines for the journal, available at:
<https://www.benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/wll/main>.

Contributions and any questions should be sent to awll9@sussex.ac.uk. The deadline for sending contributions will be the 31st March 2015.

Note from general editor of *Written Language & Literacy* [Martin Neef]

With the 18.1 issue of *Written Language and Literacy*, currently in print and to be published in February 2015, I will step back from the general editor position of the journal. I have been responsible for the journal for about seven years, which is a slightly longer period than achieved by my predecessors; the founding editor, William Bright, was at the helm from 1997 to 2003 and Robert Schreuder and Ludo Verhoeven jointly managed the journal from 2003 to 2008. Sadly, both William Bright and Robert Schreuder passed away some time after ending their services to the journal.

During the period of my editorship, I was able to oversee the publication of 14 single issues, containing almost 80 full articles (reflecting an acceptance rate of about 60%), as well as 22 book reviews and 14 other short texts. In implementing the double-blind review procedure for each submission, I contacted slightly more than 300 colleagues worldwide to request reviews. Almost exactly 150 kindly found the time to assist the journal with a review, some several times, particularly, the members of the editorial board and the associate editors, all of whom I would like to deeply thank in this way for their generous support of the journal. Most of all, naturally, I wish to thank the authors of all the submitted manuscripts and the published papers. Their sedulous efforts made it possible to attain the quality that the journal currently has.

It has been an honor for me to hold the position of general editor and it has been a pleasure to have had contact with so many colleagues from both different countries and with different scientific backgrounds; an experience that enriched my life considerably, both as a scientist and as a human being. Some of those contacts developed into further co-operations, such as editing special issues for the journal, being invited to write book chapters, and being asked to give various talks. Particularly fruitful have been the contacts with the guest editors of the special issues; half of the issues over the past years have been special issues of selected papers from conferences and workshops held in different places around the world. In this context, it is also appropriate to mention that the journal publishes on a regular basis the proceedings from the biannual workshops of the Association for Written Language and Literacy; an effective collaboration for both parties.

All these comments are indicative of the Written Language and Literacy journal's notable standing within scientific discourse on all aspects of written language. However, one aspect that could still be bemoaned – albeit perhaps somewhat reflecting my own personal scientific preferences – is that theoretical papers continue to be rather sparsely represented. Possible reasons for this could be that current period is more conducive for empirical approaches that utilize the potentials of contemporary electronic devices and large computer-readable databases compared to sophisticated theoretical endeavors. May the next editor be more successful than I have been in that regard.

It is a natural step for me to now hand over responsibility for the journal to Beatrice Primus from the University of Cologne (Germany). She has been involved with the both journal and the Association as long as I have been. I wish her success in her new position and continuing support from the community of scientists within the field of written language. I myself will continue to be involved with the journal as a member of the editorial board.

Online Research Bibliography of Written Language & Literacy [Terry Joyce]

In case you have not discovered it yet, the AWLL website is home to the Online Research Bibliography of Written Language & Literacy (ORBWLL), which can, hopefully, be of some benefit to our community of researchers (<http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/orbwill/index.html>). Aspiring to be as inclusive as possible, ORBWLL is seeking to reflect the diverse perspectives that help to inform our understandings of scripts, writing systems, written language, and literacy.

Based on processing 2,000 source bibliographies, the latest version consists of 5,655 references, together with information about the source bibliographies citing the references (with 35,249 citations in total). Although the website continues to provide the ORBWLL data in PDFs for offline consultation (one master file of alphabetic lists and one file of the most-frequently cited works), since the spring of 2014, the website also provides more dynamic online access to the ORBWLL data (<http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/orbwill/access.html>). There are two sections to the online access page. The first section consists of links to separate A-Z lists of the entries, where many of the entries are appended with a 'cited by x' button, which can be toggled to reveal/hide the 'x number' of source bibliographies citing the relevant entry. The second section provides a search function, where the search results appear for any character string input into the input box.

The ORBWLL data at the website will continue to be updated on a periodic basis (currently after processing blocks of 250 source bibliographies), and all updates will be announced in future AWLL newsletters. The compiler, Terry Joyce, would welcome recommendations for source bibliographies to process, as well as notification of any inaccuracies, if discovered, so they may be corrected.

Standards and changes:

Will the 2015 Dictionary of Dutch Spelling bring new changes? [Anneke Neijt]

The Dutch language is notorious for having undergone frequent spelling-reforms, and, it maybe indeed be one of very few languages (if not actually unique) to historically have a spelling law that regulates over spelling rules. However, the state of affairs changed at the end of the last century, when a law was enacted that assigned the task of spelling regulation to the *Nederlandse Taalunie*, an intergovernmental organization of The Netherlands, Flanders (Belgium) and Suriname. Since 1995, the Taalunie has published the *woordenlijst* on the web and in a printed version, known as *het Groene Boekje* ‘The Green Booklet’ (because of the cover’s colour). Both the web and printed versions contain a description of Dutch orthography, referred to as *leidraad*, and a list of words in hyphenated formats. Visit the “Woordenlijst Nederlandse Taal – Officiële Spelling” website (<http://woordenlijst.org/>), click on ‘Translate this page’, and see it for yourself. Are the writing systems of other languages regulated in a similar way?

The first Taalunie edition of the *woordenlijst*, published in 1995, represented a rather drastic reform of spelling, but, in contrast, the 2005 edition only introduced a smaller number of words with changed spellings and a smaller number of new rules. You can read more about both reforms in Neijt and Nunn (1997) and Nunn and Neijt (2006), respectively.

What will be changed in 2015? There are two issues that beg to be solved. First, a highly influential union of language devotees within The Netherlands, the *Genootschap Onze Taal* ‘Society for Our Language’ remains to be convinced of the value of having just one standard for spelling. In 2006, the Society published as an alternative spelling dictionary *het Witte Boekje* ‘The White Booklet’ as a sign of opposition. The second issue, which is arguably related to the opposition of the Society, is that the official rules concerning the spelling of compounds are difficult to understand. In investigating this issue, Sjaak Kroon and I found out that alternative description of how to spell compounds, can lead to better spelling performances. However, it remains to be seen whether the *leidraad* in the 2015 dictionary will adopt our description. More on this next year!

References:

- Neijt, A., & Kroon, S. (2010) De taalkundige onderbouwing van spellingregels. De officiële uitleg van de spelling van tussenklanken in samenstellingen in het Groene Boekje vergeleken met de uitleg in de Van Dale Basisspellinggids. *Pedagogische Studiën*, 87, 202-218.
- Neijt, A., & Nunn, A. (1997) The recent history of Dutch orthography. Problems solved and created. *Leuvense Bijdragen. Tijdschrift voor Germaanse filologie*, 86, 1-26.
- Nunn, A. & Neijt, A. (2006) The recent history of Dutch orthography (II). Problems solved and created by the 2005 reform. *Leuvense Bijdragen. Tijdschrift voor Germaanse filologie*, 95, 117-157.

De Gruyter Open Access book series on writing systems [Terry Joyce]

We are extremely pleased to announce that De Gruyter Open has recently decided to launch an open access book series devoted to writing systems.

As described at the book series' website (<http://degruyteropen.com/oawritingsystems/>), the writing systems series aims to publish research monographs, edited collections, and reference works about the diverse writing systems of the world from a wide spectrum of perspectives, including (but not limited to) historical studies, linguistic analyses, sociolinguistic surveys, pedagogical considerations, psycholinguistic investigations and technological issues. The high quality of publications will be ensured through a process of scrupulous peer review.

The editor of the book series is Terry Joyce (terry@tama.ac.jp), who is very much looking forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas for developing the book series and, in particular, to receiving your book proposals for inclusion within the series.

AWLL joins Facebook and Twitter!! [Lynne Cahill]

AWLL now has a social media presence. We have a Facebook page: "Association for Written Language and Literacy". If you are on Facebook, look us up and "like" us to get updates on activities and interesting relevant reports and articles.

The Twitter account is @awll2014. Again, if you are on Twitter, follow us for tweets on interesting relevant things. Do please let us know of other Twitter accounts that you think we should follow in order to keep members informed.

Thought-provoking quotations and observations

[Writing] will be replaced by the automatic transcription of speech - whereas reading is here to stay. (Sperber 2002)

This claim is made by Dan Sperber (<http://www.dan.sperber.fr/?p=75>) within his *The future of writing* (2002) contribution to a virtual symposium, "text-e", on the influence of new technologies for speech-to-text conversion.

He also comments that new technologies are likely to influence how writing systems are taught:

The acquisition of reading skills might take place earlier and more spontaneously thanks to the interaction with machines, this resulting in a de facto dissociation between the teaching of reading and that of writing. (Sperber 2002)

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*Als het over spelling gaat, worden verbazingwekkend veel mensen helemaal kierewiet. Sommigen hangen de dictator uit: ze proberen hun gelijk op te dringen aan "dommeriken" die het niet met ze eens zijn. [...] Anderen gaan schelden in plaats van te argumenteren.* (Tops, 2008: 13)

[In matters of spelling, surprisingly many people go completely crazy. Some act as dictators: they coerce the ‘foolish’ who disagree in to believing they are right. [...]  
Others use abusive language instead of argumentation.]

Guy Tops, a professor of linguistics, makes this observation within his book on Dutch spelling and phonology aimed at a broader audience.

Tops, Guy A. J. (2008). *Waarom die leettertjes in de soep. Inzicht in spelling* [Why these small letters in the soup. Understanding orthography]. Leuven: Davidsfonds.

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In his 2010 book *Language, technology, and society*, Richard Sproat reflects on the important question of “*What really contributes to literacy?*” (§5.3.2: 134) More specifically, he presents a table (Table 5.2: 137) of seven developmental indicators and their correlations with adult literacy rates, which indicates that:

... *one factor that does not correlate with literacy is the complexity of the script.* (Sproat 2010: 136)

While fully acknowledging Sproat’s prudent caveats that his “crude definition of script complexity hardly tells the whole story” (p. 137) (being, essentially, estimated symbol counts) and that he is also not claiming that “there are no differences between scripts and writing systems or that these differences have no effect” (p. 138), still, the basic observation warrants consideration as we strive to better understand written language and literacy.

Miscellaneous matters

National Hangeul Museum

Official website: <http://www.hangeul.go.kr/> (Korean only)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Hangeul.Museum/info>

Korea Times article:

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2014/10/631_166316.html

Korea.net article and photos:

<http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Policies/view?articleId=122044>

According to The Korea Times, “The National Hangeul Museum, which exhibits artifacts and artwork related to hangeul, the Korean alphabet, opened in Yongsan [Seoul] next to the National Museum of Korea on “Hangeul Day”” on the 9th October 2014.

In addition to a permanent exhibition on the history of hangeul, the three-story building of the National Hangeul Museum also houses a children’s museum, a Hangeul Learning Center, a library and halls for special exhibitions.

Calls for various related conferences, events, special issues

Encoding Languages with Particular Reference to the Chinese Language

Milan, 19 November 2014

<http://istitutoconfucio.unicatt.it/confucius-conference-encoding-languages-with-particular-reference-to>

-the-chinese-language-presentazione

Learning Written Language: Diversity of languages, Uniqueness of disorders

Strasbourg, 3-5 December 2014

<http://www-irma.u-strasbg.fr/~teyssier/langec/index.php?&lang=en&m0=1&m0=0&mdepth=0&>

7th International Summer School on Literacy Research (Supported by Society for Scientific Studies of Reading)

Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands, 22-27 August 2015

Conveners: Ludo Verhoeven and Eliane Segers

Send applications or requests for further information to: literacysummerschool@gmail.com

Scientific Studies of Reading Special Issue: Orthographic learning and representations in literacy acquisition

Call for journal abstracts. Abstracts should be submitted to the special issue editors:

Gene Ouellette, gouellette@mta.ca; Victor van Daal, vandaalv@edgehill.ac.uk

AWLL board

Anneke Neijt (president), Beatrice Primus (vice-president), Terry Joyce (secretary), Lynne Cahill

AWLL website: <http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/index.html>

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