

Association for Written Language and Literacy
Ассоциация письменного языка и письменности
Ενωση για τη γραπτη γλωσσα και τη βασικη εκπαιδευση
书面语言和识字协会
Association for Written Language and Literacy

AWLL Newsletter: Number 7: 15 November 2019

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On distribution of seventh AWLL newsletter [Terry Joyce (newsletter editor)]

While always aspiring to serve as a forum for disseminating wider research information and discussions between AWLL workshops, unquestionably, one of the main functions of the AWLL newsletters is to support the regular workshop gatherings, which are being held roughly every 18 months. To that aim, many previous newsletters have essentially alternated between sharing a brief report of the most recent workshop and launching the call for papers for the next. As newsletter 6 (NL6: 20190515) featured a report of the highly successful AWLL12 (March 2019; Cambridge), I am extremely pleased that the main item of this NL7 continues that sequence in sharing the first call for papers for AWLL13.

NL7 also continues its serialized introduction of the Japanese writing system with its fifth installment, which is the third and final part of a mini-series on the formation principles of kanji. Other regular sections are also included; with special thanks to Dimitrios Meletis for providing the first main element under *Thought-provoking quotations and observations* and with a new dimension to *Miscellaneous matters*. In addition to information about future conferences of potential interest, building on the recent clarification concerning AWLL community membership (as implemented from AWLL12 business meeting and outlined in NL6), this section will also share information about recent publications by AWLL community members. Accordingly, community members are invited to keep me updated with such details for future newsletters.

It is very much hoped that this NL7 will be of interest to you. Any comments, ideas, or items for future newsletters are always most welcome; just email them to terry@tama.ac.jp.

Past newsletters are available at <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/newsletters.html>

First call for papers for AWLL13 [David Mora Marín]

On the systematic nature of writing systems

13th International Workshop on Writing Systems and Literacy

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA

15-17 October 2020

Continuing to bring together researchers from diverse research backgrounds and from various countries, the Association of Written Language and Literacy's thirteenth gathering (AWLL13) will be the first to be hosted in the USA at the University of North Carolina.

Moreover, maintaining the core focus of AWLL workshops on understanding writing systems, AWLL13's theme seeks to explore a set of fundamental interrelated questions about the processes of codification and standardization that writing systems undergo and whether it is ultimately justifiable to regard natural writing systems as being systematic in nature. Accordingly, abstract submissions that address some of the following research issues, for example, will be particularly welcome:

- Do existing typologies of writing systems sufficiently elucidate the systematic relationships that mediate between linguistic units and graphemic representations?
- What are the factors that influence, both positively and negatively, orthographic systemization? Is systemization driven primarily by external forces, such as script adoption, or by internal motivations, such as codification and standardization?
- Can attempts at orthography reform by central authority stakeholders be effective and, if so, with what implications for programs of literacy acquisition?
- Do the orthographic and grammatical properties of typologically different writing systems interface systematically with the cognitive factors involved in the acquisition of spelling and writing?
- Has technology, in its diverse forms, from printing, digitization, to Unicode and emoji, contributed to systematization or does it foster diversity in the era of digital communication?

Extending over 3 days, AWLL13's programme of approximately 2.5 days will include two invited-speaker presentations, a themed symposium on the "Writing Systems of the Americas", AWLL's business meeting, a number of oral presentations sessions and two poster sessions, and will conclude with a panel discussion.

Invited speakers

Peter T. Daniels (independent researcher, USA)

Min Wang (University of Maryland, USA)

Local organizer

David Mora-Marín (University of North Carolina, USA)

Program committee

Lynne Cahill (University of Sussex, UK), Terry Joyce (Tama University, Japan), David Mora-Marín (University of North Carolina, USA), Dorit Ravid (University of Tel Aviv, Israel)

Important dates

First call for papers: Mid-November 2019

Second call for papers: Mid-February 2020

Submission deadline: 15 April 2020

Notification of acceptance: 31 May 2020

Workshop dates: 15-17 October 2020

Abstract submission

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted as a PDF attachment to the local organizer by 15th April 2020. Please indicate whether you would prefer to be considered for an oral session (30 mins inclusive of Q&A time) or a poster session.

Details about registering for workshop participants (for both presenters and non-presenters) will be distributed as soon as possible after acceptance notifications have been sent. Similarly, the workshop programme, with abstracts, will be circulated as soon as possible in advance.

Further information

If you have any queries regarding the conference,
please contact the local organizer, David Mora-Marín (davidmm@unc.edu).

For queries regarding AWLL,
please contact Terry Joyce (terry@tama.ac.jp).

AWLL website: <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/index.html>

AWLL13 information @ <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/workshops.html>

Introducing writing systems: Japanese [5] [Terry Joyce & Keisuke Honda]

This is the third installment to focus on the internal structure of kanji. The first piece of this mini-series provided some introductory remarks about the four principles of kanji formation, while the second focused on the two formation principles of simple kanji, namely 象形 /SHŌKEI/ ‘pictographic’ and 指事 /SHIJ/ ‘ideographic’. This third piece turns to describe the final two principles behind the structurally complex kanji that entail combinations of simple kanji, often modified in form.

The third formation principle is 会意 /KAI/ ‘semantic compound’, where simple kanji created according to the first two principles are combined to signify a meaning that is a function of the component meanings. The first two examples below are probably the most straightforward illustrations of this principle, where 木 /ki/ ‘tree’ is repeated to signify a ‘wood; grove’, and yet another 木 is then added to that combination to signify the even greater number of trees in a ‘forest’. However, for many semantic compound kanji, the contributions of the constituent’s meanings to the whole may be rather more tenuous in nature. That is illustrated in the final two examples, where 休 /yasu.mu/ ‘to rest’ is the combination of 人 /hito/ ‘person’ (modified to 亻 when on the left) with 木, to indicate a person resting by a tree, while 信 /shin.jiru/ ‘to trust’ is the combination of 人 (亻) with 言 /i.u/ ‘word; to say’ to indicate a person standing by their words who can be trusted. Compared to the 264 (12.36%) simple kanji among the 2,136 official jōyō kanji, semantic compound kanji are more numerous at 531 (24.86%) (Shirakawa 2012).

林	/RIN, hayashi/ ‘wood; groove’	木 /ki/ ‘tree’ + 木 /ki/ ‘tree’
森	/SHIN, mori/ ‘forest’	林 /hayashi/ ‘wood; groove’ + another 木 /ki/ ‘tree’
休	/KYŪ, yasu.mu/ ‘to rest’	人 /hito/ ‘person’ (→ 亻) + 木 /ki/ ‘tree’
信	/SHIN, shin.jiru/ ‘to believe’	人 /hito/ ‘person’ (→ 亻) + 言 /i.u/ ‘word; to say’

The final principle of kanji formation is 形声 /KEISEI/ ‘phonetic compounds’, which is by far the majority principle, accounting for 1,312 (61.42%) of the jōyō kanji (Shirakawa 2012). These complex kanji consist of an 意符 /IFU/ ‘semantic determiner’ (commonly referred to as 部首 /BUSHU/ ‘radical’), which indicates the general semantic domain of the kanji, combined with an 音符 /ONPU/ ‘phonetic determiner’, which indicates the Sino-Japanese (on-yomi) pronunciation (although not always reliably). For instance, in all of the following examples, 寺 /JI, tera/ ‘temple’ is the phonetic determiner indicating the on-yomi of /JI/ in the first three cases and /SHI/ in the last case. The extent to which the phonetic determiners of phonetic compound kanji are reliable indicators of their on-yomi pronunciations will be taken up in a later installment.

侍	/JI, samurai/ ‘serve; samurai’	人 /hito/ ‘person’ (→ 亻) + 寺 /ji/ ‘temple’
持	/JI, mo.tsu/ ‘to hold’	手 /te/ ‘hand’ (→ 扌) + 寺 /JI/ ‘temple’
時	/JI, toki/ ‘hour; time’	日 /hi/ ‘sun; day’ + 寺 /JI/ ‘temple’
詩	/SHI/ ‘poem’	言 /i.u/ ‘word; to say’ + 寺 /JI/ ‘temple’

Next time, we will turn to another aspect of the endlessly fascinating Japanese writing system!

Thought-provoking quotations and observations [5]

The thought-provoking quote below comes from Andrew Davidson's (2019) paper entitled *Writing: the re-construction of language*. Taking as his point of departure David Olson's (2016) thesis that writing permits linguistic elements to become explicit objects of awareness, Davidson contends, more radically, that linguistic elements (phonemes, words, and sentences are explicitly discussed) are constructed, rather than re-constructed, by writing.

[...] a core and innate disposition to language is supplemented and modified through the socio-cultural artefact of a symbolic notation system. Writing is, thus, a differential supplement to language; an artefact and an exteriority that becomes an interiority. The image, the ideality of writing, rather than [...] raising to awareness an always and already domain of linguistic entities, instead constructs those entities to conform to the image. The map becomes the territory and the medium informs the message. Phylogenetically, after centuries and centuries of writing, and ontogenetically, after years and years of training in literacy, the ideality of writing comes to influence linguistic reality. (Davidson, 2019: 146)

Naturally, some major repercussions would follow if one accepts Davidson's claim as valid. One that warrants particular consideration relates directly to the meta-level, for, while it is by no means a new concern, it remains highly relevant to this day. If one is to take seriously the claim that the central concepts that are the focus of linguistic investigation are indeed constituted by writing, it potentially calls into question the value of writing as an object of linguistic study, which is still, regrettably, widely underappreciated. That is, from Davidson's perspective, it is possible to regard writing as being essentially surplus to language (consistent with the fact that some languages continue to lack writing). However, while, arguably, not a radical claim in itself, it is vital to simultaneously recognize that writing is the very tool that affords the analysis of language in the first place. The question at the heart of this debate continues to be whether writing enables us to discover linguistic structures that exist independently or whether it only allows us to perceive the linguistic structures that it has created.

Davidson, Andrew. (2019). *Writing: the re-construction of language*. *Language Sciences*, 72, 134–149.
doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2018.09.004

Olson, David. (2016). *The mind on paper*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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**MUST REMEMBER TO SUBMIT AN  
ABSTRACT TO AWLL13!!**

Perhaps the Sans Forgetica font (<https://sansforgetica.rmit/>) used immediately above may already be familiar to many recipients of this newsletter (given that it was released in October 2018). However, as it has only recently come to my attention, I trust that everyone will understand how the temptation to apply in this playful plug for AWLL13, particularly given the possibility that it could actually have an effect, was just too great to resist!

Within a short PDF information booklet, which comes in the zip file if one downloads the OpenType font file, the team at Melbourne's RMIT University behind its creation state:

Sans Forgetica is a font that has been scientifically designed using principles of psychology to improve retention of written information. (p. 2)

The font is best used as a highlight tool to convert key passages that users want to remember. (p. 16)

The team's basic claim is that because the cognitive processing of this font entails a degree of 'desirable difficulty' (which was settled on based on experimental results that contrasted it with two other design conditions), the additional processing efforts lead to improved retention and recall of information. However, just as the effects of highlighting can be diminished if overly applied, the potential risks of overuse would seem to be equally relevant for using this font as a device for highlighting. Moreover, in a short but informative online article that discusses the font, Riechers (2018 December) poses some insightful questions:

As readers become accustomed to Sans Forgetica's initially odd appearance, grow more comfortable with it, and start reading it faster, will the retention rate of information decline? Will their brains simply adapt to the difficulties posed by the typeface in such a way as to eliminate the benefits?

As Riechers observes, such questions would require long-term studies to investigate properly. More specifically, while acknowledging that a reported seven percent increase in memory retention within initial testing is not insubstantial, Riechers suggests that such an increase may not be sufficiently robust to avoid being effectively negated as users become accustomed to the font over time.

Riechers, Angela. (10 December, 2018). Can "bad" type design help readers absorb and remember information? Typography section of *Eye on Design*.

<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/sans-forgetica-a-typeface-to-remember/>

## Miscellaneous matters

### *Calls for various related conferences, events, special issues*

*Association of Reading and Writing in Asia 2020 (ARWA 2020)*

Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing; 27-28 February 2020

<https://ww5.psy.cuhk.edu.hk/arwa/index.php/front-page-content/arwa-2020/>

*The evolution of writing systems: Empirical and cross-linguistic approaches workshop (AG5)*

Workshop session (AG5) at the 42nd Annual Conference of the German Linguistics Society (DGfS)

University of Hamburg; 4-6 March, 2020

Contacts: Stefan Hartmann (stefan1.hartmann@uni-bamberg.de) and Jessica Nowak (nowakj@uni-mainz.de)

*G21C Grapholinguistics in the 21st century—From graphemes to knowledge*

Paris; 17-19 June, 2020

<https://grafematik2020.sciencesconf.org>

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Recent publications by AWLL community members

Please note that this first listing has been compiled by consulting members' websites, attempting to select as far as possible one recent, representative reference for everyone. Accordingly, this first list is likely to be more inclusive than those that will appear in future newsletters, which will be based solely on information provided (so please remember to keep me updated for inclusion in future newsletters!).

Please note also that all references are being listed alphabetically, and, thus, not all are consistent with the alphabetic listing of AWLL community members at the website (i.e., whenever the community member is not the first author).

Beeksmā, Merijn, & Neef, Martin. (Eds.). (2018). Understanding Writing Systems [Special Issue], *Written Language and Literacy*, 21(1).

Boyes, Philip J., & Steele, Philippa M. (Eds.). (2019). *Understanding relations between scripts II: Early alphabets* (Contexts of and Relations between Early Writing Systems (CREWS) 1). Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Brandes, Gilad, & Ravid, Dorit. (2019). The development of adverbial clause functions in Hebrew narrative and expository writing across adolescence. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(1), 130–158.

Cahill, Lynne. (2019). *Discovering phonetics and phonology*. London: Red Globe Press.

Crellin, Robert. (2018), Introduction to the Persian harmony of the Gospels. in M. Hassanabadi, R. Jahani & C. Jahani (eds.), *A Unified Gospel in Persian*. (Studia Iranica Upsaliensia, 33.) Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet.

- Fuhrhop, Nanna. (2018). Graphematik des Deutschen im europäischen Vergleich. In Angelika Wöllstein, Peter Gallmann, Mechthild Habermann, & Manfred Krifka (Eds.), *Grammatiktheorie und Empirie in der germanistischen Linguistik* (S.585.613). Berlin: de Gruyter,
- Hamann, Silke, Veronica Miatto & Laura J. Downing. (2019). Duration of vowels before homorganic nasal-obstruent sequences in Tumbuka. In Sasha Calhoun, Paola Escudero, Marija Tabain & Paul Warren (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 19th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* (pp. 3568–3572). Canberra: Australasian Speech Science and Technology Association.
- Hans-Bianchi, Barbara, & Balsamo, C. (2018). “The Page” - Building a Pennsylvania German thesaurus through the correction of OCR errors. *Iperstoria: Digital Humanities: a cross-disciplinary approach to literature, language and education*, 12, 37-49.
- Haralambous, Yannis. (2019). Approches et applications de la graphématique. In *Méthodes et interdisciplinarité 1* (pp.135–151). ISTE Éditions.
- Joyce, Terry, & Masuda, Hisashi. (2018). Introduction to the multi-script Japanese writing system and word processing. In Hye Pae (Ed.), *Writing systems, reading processes, and cross-linguistic influences: Reflections from the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages* (Bilingual Processing and Acquisition 7) (pp. 179–199). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Judson, Anna P. (2017). Processes of script adaptation and creation in Linear B: the evidence of the “extra” signs. In Philippa M. Steele (Ed.), *Understanding Relations Between Scripts: the Aegean Writing Systems* (pp. 111–126). Oxford: Oxbow.
- Kim, Jeong-Young. (2019). 유럽의 한국어 교육: 헬싱키 대학교를 중심으로 [Korean Language Education in Europe: focusing on the University of Helsinki]. In Proceedings of 2019 AKS 한국학 국제 학술대회. Korea.
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- Masuda, Hisashi, & Joyce, Terry. (2018). Constituent-priming investigations of the morphological activation of Japanese compound words. In Hye Pae (Ed.), *Writing systems, reading processes, and cross-linguistic influences: Reflections from the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages* (Bilingual Processing and Acquisition 7) (pp. 221–244). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
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- Myers, James. (2019). *The grammar of Chinese characters: Productive knowledge of formal patterns in an orthographic system*. London: Routledge.
- Roberts, David, & Vydrin, Valentin. (2019). Tonal oral reading errors in the orthography of Eastern Dan (Côte d’Ivoire). *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 28(1), 1–28.

- Sircar, S., & Nag, S. (2019). Spelling and reading words in Bengali: The role of distributed phonology. In R.M. Joshi, & C. McBride (Eds.), *Handbook of literacy in akshara orthography* (Perspectives from Cognitive Neurosciences, Linguistics, Psychology and Education) (pp. 161–179). Cham: Springer. doi http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05977-4_9
- Sampson, Geoffrey. (2018). The redundancy of self-organization as an explanation of English spelling. *Language*, 93, e43–47.
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- Verheijen, Lieke. (2018). Orthographic principles in computer-mediated communication: The SUPER-functions of textisms and their interaction with age and medium [Special issue: Understanding writing systems, edited by Merijn Beekma & Martin Neef]. *Written Language & Literacy*, 21(1), 111–145. doi:10.1075/wll.00012.ver

AWLL board

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AWLL website: <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/index.html>;
On Facebook and Twitter [[@awll](#)]

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