

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

AWLL Newsletter: Number 8: 15 May 2020

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

During these difficult times of prudent, yet unaccustomed and stressful forms of social isolation that we are all enduring, the communities to which we belong have probably never been of greater importance. Although my introductory comments on the six-monthly distribution of these AWLL newsletters usually harp on about them in terms of helping to sustain our research community between our regular workshop gatherings, the sentiment has been particularly strong on the distribution of this eighth newsletter (NL8).

Accordingly, I have been especially thankful for the support of colleagues and friends in preparing this newsletter. In particular, I would like to thank Anneke Neijt for joining me in writing a heartfelt farewell for Beatrice Primus (former AWLL vice-president) who sadly passed away towards the end of last year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Robert Crellin in connection with two NL8 items; firstly, for the announcement of the latest *Written Language & Literacy* special issue (22:2) and, secondly, for writing the interesting piece for NL8's *Thought-provoking quotations and observations* section. Next, I would acknowledge my appreciation to Keisuke Honda for regularly working with me on the *Introducing writing systems: Japanese* feature, now with its sixth installment for NL8. And, finally, I would like to thank all the community members who recent replied with information about their most relevant publication since the last newsletter, as again shared under the final *Miscellaneous matters* section.

As always, I very much hope that this AWLL NL8 will be of interest. 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>

In memoriam Beatrice Primus (1953-2019) [Anneke Neijt & Terry Joyce]



Speaking at AWLL6 (2008)



University of Cologne website

Towards the end of 2019, we received the extremely sad news that Beatrice Primus had passed away. Beatrice had been one of the founding members of the Association for Written Language and Literacy. Thus, we both had the immense privilege of working with her, as she served as the AWLL vice-president during its first phrase (2004-2016), as a member of many workshop programme committees (2004-2014), and as the General Editor of the *Written Language & Literacy* journal (2015-2017).

A major impetus for the Association's emergence was the German and Dutch spelling reforms of 1996. Although there were massive protests from both lay people and linguists within both of these neighboring countries, regrettably, there were no cross-border collaborations between linguists interested in orthography. Against that background, Peter Eisenberg, Robert Schreuder and Anneke Neijt decided to organize the first international workshop in 1997 to foster greater awareness of written language. The workshop took place at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen, suitably close to the mutual border. Harald Baayen proposed its theme *What spelling changes*; apt in evoking the range of reactions to orthographic changes, from feelings of surprise and reluctance to earnest desires to know what changes were being implemented and how they would influence language systems and usage in the future. After the second international workshop (2000), Beatrice joined the collaborations and hosted the third workshop, *From letter to sound*, in Cologne (2002). Then, at a smaller meeting, *Crossing Borders*, in 2003, the Association was founded in cooperation with the journal, which, at that time, was edited by Robert Schreuder and Ludo Verhoeven.

The motif of *Crossing Borders* undoubtedly resonated throughout Beatrice's life. After growing up within a multilingual environment in Rumania, in early adulthood, Beatrice crossed national border to enter university in Germany. Later, Beatrice would also cross multiple academic borders, in terms of her research interests—ranging from syntax, semantics, interpunction to the forms and meanings of letters—as well as in her research methodologies—ranging from historical, experimental and comparative linguistics. Beatrice was unsurpassed in her knowledge of the

systems that underlie the diverse components of multiple languages. Her calm and contemplative, yet simultaneously innovative and decisive, ways of approaching research issues will be sorely missed. Most unfortunately, Beatrice's crossing of the final border of life came far too soon, leaving us with dear memories.

Website: <https://idsl1.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/en/personen/professoreseiten/prof-dr-beatrice-primus>

Written Language & Literacy obituary by Martin Neef: <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00030.obi>

Linguistic list obituary by Klaus von Heusinger: <https://linguistlist.org/issues/30/30-4646.html>

Wikipedia page (German): https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice_Primus

AWLL11 special issue of *Written Language & Literacy* 22:2 (2019)

[Terry Joyce & Robert Crellin (special issue editors)]

We are most pleased to announce the publication of the latest *Written Language & Literacy* special issue (22:2), which became available recently. This special issue, *Writing systems: Past, present (... and future?)*, consists of five papers from AWLL's 11th workshop held at Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan in August 2017. AWLL11 is notable for being the first AWLL workshop to be held outside of Europe.

Consistent with AWLL11's aspirations of fostering beneficial synergies between diachronic and synchronic perspectives on how writing systems develop and function, this special issue collection consists of two papers on historical writing systems, two on contemporary ones, and one future-orientated paper.

Neef, Martin. (2019). [Obituary. In memoriam: Beatrice Primus (12 September 1953 – 29 November 2019)]. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 165–166. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00030.obi>

Joyce, Terry, & Crellin, Robert. (2019). Introduction. *Writing systems: Past, present (... and future?)*. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 167–178. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00024.joy>

Judson, Anna P. (2019). Orthographic variation as evidence for the development of the Linear B writing system. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 179–197. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00025.jud>

Crellin, Robert. (2019). Writing vowels in Punic: From morphography to phonography. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 198–222. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00026.cre>

Pae, Hye K., Bae, Sungbong, & Yi, Kwangoh. (2019). More than an alphabet: Linguistic features of Korean and their influences on Hangul word recognition. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 223–246. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00027.pae>

Joyce, Terry, & Masuda, Hisashi. (2019). On the notions of graphematic representation and orthography from the perspective of the Japanese writing system. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 247–279. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00028.joy>

Burkhardt, Jey Lingam, & Burkhardt, Jürgen Martin. (2019). Developing a unified orthography for Berawan: An endangered Bornean language. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 280–306.

<https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00029.bur>

[Editor note: Links to the abstracts can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.22.2>

Information and links to all of the *Written Language & Literacy* special issues for past AWLL workshops can be found at <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/publications.html>]

Brief report about the EWS workshop [Terry Joyce]

One of the themed workshops of the 42nd Annual Conference of the German Linguistics Society (DGfS) held at the Universität Hamburg, from 4th to 6th March, was the *The Evolution of Writing Systems: Empirical and Cross-linguistic Approaches* workshop (AG5). It was organized by Lisa Dücker (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg), Stefan Hartmann (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf), Jessica Nowak (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz) and Renata Szczepaniak (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg).

As the organizers astutely observed within their introductory remarks, there has, undoubtedly, been a positive surge in research interest for understanding graphemic systems from linguistic and interdisciplinary perspectives over recent years. To further facilitate such welcome trends, the workshop specifically sought to bring together researchers from a diverse range of approaches, such as corpus-based and experimentation, who are working to investigate the emergence and diachronic variations of graphemic systems. Over the three days of the workshop, there were 16 oral presentations, including two keynote presentations by Anja Voeste (University of Gießen) and Paul Rössler (University of Regensburg). Covering a broad range of writing systems in both European and non-European languages and at different diachronic stages, the presentations addressed a number of topics of graphematic research, including (1) the typology of writing systems, (2) the various dimensions that underlie graphemic variation, (2) punctuation, both diachronically and cross-linguistically, (4) changes in graphemic representation, and (5) measurements of graphic variation.

It is sincerely hoped that the workshop organizers will be successful in their laudable aspirations to put together a special issue collection of papers from the workshop, in order to further contribute to the growing interest in studying the dynamics of graphemic systems.

The AG5 workshop programme, with links to the presentation abstracts, is available at:
<https://www.zfs.uni-hamburg.de/en/dgfs2020/programm/arbeitsgruppen.html>

Introducing writing systems: Japanese [6] [Terry Joyce & Keisuke Honda]

Over the last three installments, this feature on introducing the Japanese writing system has focused on the structures and formation principles of kanji. In contrast, with this installment, we begin a new mini-series that will take a closer look at the phonological aspects of kanji. Accordingly, this piece starts with an overview of the phonological values associated with individual kanji; traditionally known as 読み /yomi/ or, as a literal translation in English, ‘readings’.

In the very first installment of this feature, we noted that most kanji are associated with two basic kinds of readings; namely, 音 /ON/ Sino-Japanese and 訓 /KUN/ native-Japanese readings. Although this binary distinction is essentially accurate of the contemporary Japanese writing system in a general sense, it is also fair to say that it entails a degree of simplification concerning certain historical nuances and some lexical etymologies.

Historically, kanji originated in China and their transmission to Japan, often mediated through the Korean peninsula, was in the form of texts written in Classical Chinese. Accordingly, the imported Chinese characters continued to be associated with the phonological values in the source language, albeit with some Sino-Korean influences. Even though some forms of phonological adaption were involved, as well as semantic shifts, those phonological values gradually formed what are known as Sino-Japanese readings, traditionally referred to as 音読み /ON'yomi/ 'sound readings', 漢字音 /KANJIION/ 'character sounds' or simply 音 /ON/ 'sounds'. Moreover, the influx of Chinese written culture continued over a period of several centuries, such that kanji and their phonological values were repeatedly borrowed during different periods and from different regions of China. Based on their historical and geographical origins, the three main categories of Sino-Japanese readings are 吳音 /GOON/ 'Wu sounds', 漢音 /KAN'ON/ 'Han sounds' and 唐音 /TŌON/ 'Tang sounds'. Thus, it is not uncommon for a given kanji to be associated with multiple Sino-Japanese readings, as exemplified by 行 'go; perform; line'.

行 /GYŌ/ (GOON); /KŌ/ (KAN'ON); /AN/ (TŌON)

Over time, the introduction of literacy into Japan led to the development of traditions for annotating and explicating Classical Chinese texts, such that they could be interpreted and translated into Japanese. Such conventions simultaneously afforded the Japanese with ways of adapting Chinese characters to represent for the first time their own language in writing. Thus, in addition to continuing to use kanji for their Sino-Japanese readings, the Japanese also started to utilize them to represent native-Japanese translations, which are referred to as 訓読み /KUN'yomi/ 'gloss readings', 漢字訓 /KANJIKUN/ 'character glosses' or just 訓 /KUN/ 'glosses'. Today, many kanji are associated with both Sino-Japanese and native-Japanese readings and, just as many kanji have multiple on readings, many also have multiple kun readings. Again, 行 can serve to illustrate, for it is commonly used to represent the stem elements of two native-Japanese verbs, with the respective final inflectional elements represented by hiragana characters.

行く /iku/ 'go' (as a combination of 行 /i/ and く /ku/)

行う /okonau/ 'perform' (as a combination of 行 /okona/ and う /u/)

This kanji is by no means exceptional in having both multiple native-Japanese and Sino-Japanese readings. As mentioned in our second installment, the official 常用漢字表 /JŌYŌKANJIIHYŌ/ 'list of characters for general use' currently consists of 2,136 kanji, but the list also stipulates 4,388 official readings, which yields an overall kanji to readings ratio of 1:2 (albeit with considerable variations across the list). It should also be stressed that these numbers of readings

are token counts, made up of 2,353 Sino-Japanese and 2,035 native-Japanese token counts. Thus, as will be discussed further in subsequent installments, the majority of Sino-Japanese readings are associated with multiple kanji, with, for example, the Sino-Japanese reading of /kō/ being associated with the maximum of 67 different jōyō kanji (including 行). Two further caveats that warrant mention within this initial overview are that (1) the official list does not specify all of the readings that continue to be associated with some kanji in actual texts and (2) the distinction between on and kun readings is not always clear-cut. For example, some readings that are designated as native-Japanese readings actually originate from Chinese, such as 馬 /uma/ 'horse', and Korean, such as 寺 /tera/ 'temple'.

Thought-provoking quotations and observations [8] [Robert Crellin]

Word processing has become such an essential part of our daily lives, particularly for those of us who write for a living, that we tend to take its presence there, and indeed its existence as an activity in itself, for granted. Yet the tool we use for this activity, namely word processing software is, of course, like the personal computer on which it depends, a very recent innovation in the story of the written word. Indeed, the modern incarnation of the word processor, such as Microsoft Word, was by no means an inevitability, and could have taken a different form.

The essential component of what we would now call a word processor could be said to be a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor, which displays your work on screen as it will look on the printed page, in real time. In this way, the word processor brings together meaning and form in much the same way that we would if we sat in front of a piece of paper and began writing and/or drawing. In so doing, the word processor gives us the illusion of an experience akin to physically writing.

The arrival of the WYSIWYG paradigm for word processing in the 1980s represented a revolution in the way that we interact with the process of writing. However, before its arrival, software for writing would generally separate meaning and form. This is to say that text would be composed independently of the specification of its final appearance. In considerable measure this was because it was simply not possible technologically at that stage in time to bring the two together in real time. Nevertheless, the separation of meaning and form has advantages in the writing process. It enables the writer to focus on what s/he wants to say first, without needing to worry about its final appearance, which can be decided later. Many writers have found this helpful, to the extent that some, including, notably, George R. R. Martin, still use 1980's software written for MS-DOS for their writing.

The history of word processing is a topic that has important implications for the way in which we interact with and interpret the written word in the modern age, and therefore important for anyone interested in writing *per se*. The story is explored in a fascinating book entitled, *Track changes: A literary history of word processing*, by Matthew Kirschenbaum. Approaching the topic from a literary perspective, Kirschenbaum takes the reader on a journey from the very early days of word processing, through to contemplating its future, and charts the interaction between

writer and machine throughout.

The difficult circumstances in which we all currently find ourselves will no doubt mean significant changes in the way we interact with one another through the written word. For anyone seeking to reflect on what those changes might look like, *Track changes* is a highly recommended source of inspiration.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. 2016. *Track changes: A literary history of word processing*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

This contribution was completed as part of ongoing research under the CREWS project (Contexts of and Relations between Early Writing Systems), funded by the European Research Council under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 677758).

Miscellaneous matters

Calls for various related conferences, events, special issues

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

Paris; 17-19 June, 2020

<https://grafematik2020.sciencesconf.org>

Please note that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this conference will be conducted online.

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### *Recent publications by AWLL community members*

As launched in the previous newsletter, this final *Miscellaneous matters* provides a list of recent publications (i.e., since the last newsletter) by AWLL core community members.

Although the AWLL mailing list is open to anyone interested in occasionally receiving information emails, membership to AWLL's core community is based primarily on attendance to AWLL workshops. All participants of the three most recent workshops (AWLL10 in 2016, AWLL11 in 2017 and AWLL12 in 2019) are eligible to have a brief member profile posted at the community page and to include recent publications under this section of future newsletters (for further information, go to <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/community.html>).

Ahlberg, Aija Katriina, Eklund, Kenneth, Otieno, Suzanne C. S. A., & Nieminen, Lea. (2019). From abugida to alphabet in Konso, Ethiopia: The interplay between script and phonological awareness. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(1), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00018.ahl>

Cahill, Michael. (2019). Tone, orthographies, and phonological depth in African languages. In Samson Lotven, Silvina Bongiovanni, Phillip Weirich, Robert Botne & Samuel Gyasi Obeng (Eds.), *African linguistics across the disciplines: Selected papers from the 48th Annual Conference on African Linguistics* (pp. 103–123). Berlin: Language Science Press.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3520575>

Crellin, Robert. (2020). What's in a (personal) name? Morphology and identity in Jewish Greek

- literature in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In Dariya Rafiyenko, & Ilja A. Seržant (Eds.), *Postclassical Greek: Contemporary approaches to philology and linguistics* (Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs [TiLSM], 335) (pp. 242–282). Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110677522-011>
- Haralambous, Yannis (Ed.). (2019). *Graphemics in the 21st Century: /gɤafematik/ Brest, June 13-15, 2018, Proceedings* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 1). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <http://www.fluxus-editions.fr/index.php>
- Honda, Keisuke. (2019). What do kanji graphs represent in the current Japanese writing system? Towards a unified model of kanji as written signs. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Graphemics in the 21st Century: /gɤafematik/ Brest, June 13-15, 2018, Proceedings* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 1) (pp. 185-208). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <http://www.fluxus-editions.fr/gla1-hond.pdf>
- Joyce, Terry, & Masuda, Hisashi. (2019). On the notions of graphematic representation and orthography from the perspective of the Japanese writing system. [Special issue: Writing systems: Past, present (... and future?), edited by Terry Joyce and Robert Crellin]. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 248–280. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00028.joy>
- Judson, Anna P. (2019). Orthographic variation as evidence for the development of the Linear B writing system. *Written Language & Literacy*, 22(2), 179–197. <https://doi.org/10.1075/wll.00025.jud>
- Levie, Ronit, Ashkenazi, Orit, Eitan Stanzas, Shirly, Zwilling, Rachel, Raz, Efrat, Hershkovitz, Liat, & Ravid, Dorit. (2020). The route to the derivational verb family in Hebrew: A psycholinguistic study of acquisition and development. *Morphology*, 30(1), 1-60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11525-020-09348-4>
- Meletis, Dimitrios. (2019). The grapheme as a universal basic unit of writing. *Writing Systems Research*, 11(1), 26–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17586801.2019.1697412>
- Roberts, David, Boyd, Ginger, Merz, Johannes, & Vydrin, Valentin. (2020). Quantifying written ambiguities in tone languages: A comparative study of Elip, Mbelime and Eastern Dan. *Language Documentation and Conservation*, 14, 108-138.
- Treiman, Rebecca, Rosales, Nicole, Cusner, Lauren, & Kessler, Brett. (2020). Cues to stress in English spelling. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2020.104089>

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AWLL board

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