

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

AWLL Newsletter: Number 10: 15 May 2021

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

As the specter of the coronavirus pandemic continues to loom ominously around the world, we can but hope that all countries will soon benefit from the appropriate provision of vaccination programmes.

This AWLL newsletter is the tenth (NL10) one to be shared over the last five years at six-month intervals and so, in addition to thanking everyone who has contributed to it (admittedly prepared in a bit of rush), I would particularly like to take this occasion to express my appreciation to everyone who has contributed welcome content to all the newsletters over that period.

The main item of news for NL10 is an update announcement from the organizing committee of the AWLL13 conference, which follows on the next page. NL10 also features the eighth instalment of the *Introducing writing systems: Japanese* series, three pieces under the *Thought-provoking quotations and observations* and, under *Miscellaneous matters*, a list of recent publications by AWLL community members including two ‘mini-flyers’ for book publications.

As always, I very much hope that this AWLL NL10 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>

Update announcement concerning AWLL13 [AWLL13 organizing committee]

As communicated in the last newsletter, when the organizing committee for AWLL13 initially decided to postpone the conference from October 2020, it was with genuine hopes that the pandemic situation might have improved sufficiently to allow for a return to conventional in-person conferences by the end of 2021.

Although the rollout of vaccination programmes in many places around the world offers tangible hope that the pandemic will end at some point, the committee now accepts that, in the interests of participant health and safety and reflecting continuing travel restrictions, it is no longer feasible to consider convening AWLL13 as an in-person conference during 2021. However, rather than further postponing AWLL13 indefinitely, the organizers believe that, in order to maintain the tradition of AWLL conferences, the most realistic option is to convene AWLL13 as an online conference in 2021.

Moreover, while acknowledging that the significance of a conference's 'venue' undoubtedly changes somewhat in the case of online conferences, as the background motivation for AWLL13 to take place at the University of North Carolina (UNC) was to broadened the geographical diversity of AWLL conference venues, the conference organizers continue to regard UNC as a suitable 'virtual' venue for AWLL13. Accordingly, the organizers have decided to convene AWLL13 as an online conference over the three-day period of 21~23 (Thu~Sat) October 2021, and a revised call for papers will be circulated shortly.

Updated version of ORBWLL available [Terry Joyce]

The Online Research Bibliography of Written Language & Literacy (ORBWLL) has been recently updated (20210401; <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/orbwll/index.html>). Now based on 3,000 source bibliographies, the latest version consists of 7,545 references.

Moreover, with sincere appreciation to Ikue Yawata (a former student and now freelance programmer), ORBWLL is once again available as a series of alphabetically-sectioned webpages. Thus, in addition to the possibility of keyword searching of the main PDF, with all 7,545 references, the webpages incorporate expandable lists of all the source bibliographies that cite a particular reference. The source bibliographies yield a total of 54,881 citations to the current ORBWLL references. A supplementary PDF also lists the 109 most-frequently cited references (in descending order from 222 citations to 42 citations). As always, feedback concerning any inaccuracies discovered is always most welcome, as are recommendations for source bibliographies to include.

Introducing writing systems: Japanese [8] [Terry Joyce & Keisuke Honda]

This instalment of our serialized introduction of the Japanese writing system (JWS) is the last in a three-part mini-series focusing on some of the phonological aspects of kanji. The previous pieces clarified the distinction between 音 /ON/ Sino-Japanese (SJ) and 訓 /KUN/ native-Japanese (NJ) readings that are associated with most kanji, and acknowledged that these readings generally correspond to specific morphemes of both SJ and NJ origins. However, as yet another factor that contributes to the JWS's overall complexity, it also bears empathizing that this general principle should not be interpreted as implying that all graphematic representations with kanji are purely morphologically motivated. Accordingly, this piece seeks to further illustrate the complex nature of the relationships between kanji and Japanese morphology and phonology.

As explained in the previous instalment, SJ readings predominantly correspond to bound morphemes, whereas NJ readings tend to be either simple words or the stems of verbs and adjectives. Recycling a pertinent example from our very first instalment (see newsletter 3), 日 is associated with four official (Jōyō) readings; namely, SJ /NICHIGA/ and NJ /hi/, /ka/. It is appropriate to regard these as distinct morphemes for ‘day’, ‘sun’, ‘Japan’ (and other related meanings), because the readings cannot be further analysed morphologically. Thus, the graphematic representations of the following compound words involving 日 conform to the morphographic principle.

日曜日 /NICHIGA-YŌ-BI/ ‘Sunday’ [sun + weekday + day]

日々 /hi-bi/ ‘days’ [day + day; 日々 is a kanji indicating reduplication of preceding]

Notwithstanding the basic associations between kanji and morphemes, there are also numerous exceptions where certain kanji combinations are associated with particular readings. Known traditionally as 熟字訓 /JUKU-JI-KUN/ ‘monomorphemic representations’, such combinations typically correspond to simple NJ words or, less frequently, to non-Chinese loanwords that are synchronically monomorphemic.¹ Although there are relatively few jukujikun in general contemporary use, there is certainly a discernible penchant among novelists, artists and copywriters to create novel jukujikun representations for expressive purposes, even though they invariably require the supplement of 振り仮名 /fu.ri.ga-na/ ‘rubi glosses’, in either hiragana or katakana above the kanji, to clarify the intended pronunciation.

/MYŌ-NICHIGA/ ‘tomorrow’ [conventional SJ reading]

明日 /ashita/, /asu/ ‘tomorrow’ [conventional NJ jukujikun]

/tumorō/ ‘tomorrow’ [novel Foreign-Japanese (FJ) jukujikun, with rubi 明日]

In contrast to jukujikun, where the meaning of an NJ word is loosely conveyed by semantically-relevant kanji, there are also many lexical representations where the graphematic representation with kanji is based solely on their SJ or NJ readings, with little or no reference to their meanings. Such phonological transcriptions essentially hinge on the rebus principle and are generally referred as 当て字 /a.te.ji/ (literally ‘assigned characters’); a vaguely defined term

that in fact subsumes different types, such as 音訳 /ON-YAKU/ ‘phonological translation’ and 世話字 /sewa.ji/ ‘vernacular characters’. The basic technique was originally devised as a way of transcribing Buddhist Sanskrit terms and other loanwords in Chinese, but, within Japan, it has also been extended to the transcription of vernacular NJ and FJ words from Western languages. While a considerable number of historical ateji words are still commonly used in contemporary Japanese, many have also been superseded by phonographic representations with either hiragana or katakana. New ateji representations, even if usually transient in nature, are also often encountered within manga and computer-mediated communication.

釈迦 /SHA-KA/ ‘Buddha’ [< Sanskrit *Śākyamuni*]

浪漫 /RŌ-MAN/ ‘Romanticism, romance’ [< French *roman*]

泥棒 /doro-BŌ/ ‘thief’ [< NJ *oshitoribō* (?)²]

The historical utilization of kanji for phonological transcriptions eventually led to the separate developments of Japan’s two indigenous phonographic scripts—平仮名 /hiragana/ and 片仮名 /katakana/—collectively referred to as 仮名 /kana/. In concluding our mini-series of three instalments on the phonological characteristics of kanji, this observation bridges neatly to this feature’s next mini-series, which will focus on the kana scripts, starting with how they were independently derived from kanji.

¹Takenami, Satoshi. (1987). Jukujikun. In Kiyoji Satō (Ed.), *Kanji to nihongo* (pp. 295–308). Tokyo: Meiji Shoin.

²According to one possible etymology, as cited in the 日本国語大辞典 dictionary, this is an ateji for /dorobō/; a phonetic shift from /toribō/, which, in turn, was clipped from 押し取り坊 /o.shi.to.ri.bō/.

Thought-provoking quotations and observations [10]

Quotation and comments shared by Amalia Gnanadesikan

[The average person] is likely to forget that writing is only a conventional device for recording sounds and that language is primarily speech.

Albert C. Baugh & Thomas Cable (1978), *A History of the English Language* 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, page 16.

On recently re-reading this sentence in a textbook from my college days, I was astonished to see such an inaccurate and Eurocentric description of writing in a work of such linguistic sophistication—only something that records sounds, indeed! The authors seem never to have heard of logography! (Not to mention that they don’t even say the sounds are the sounds of *language*). According to Google Books, the fifth edition of 2002 includes the same words, but starts the sentence with “we”, so the misrepresentation has stuck. No wonder the study of writing systems has been slow to gain acceptance among linguists...



Snippet of French news shared by Yannis Haralambous

As recently reported by *Le Figaro* (March 15, 2021), French museums, starting with the Carnavalet Museum in Paris, have decided to cease using Roman numerals in all written communications. The policy will be applied not only to large numbers (such as representing the year 1888 as MDCCCLXXXVIII, which can take a few seconds for normal human brains to parse) but also for small numbers in conventional expressions, such as ‘Louis XIV’ or ‘xx^e siècle’ (traditionally written in small caps and a superscript ‘e’). It seems that the Louvre has already implemented this policy, but only for centuries and not for royal names. The announcement has drawn various reactions, including two articles in the Italian *Corriere de la Sera* (March 16 and 17, 2021), which claims that Americans are more respectful of Latin tradition than its ‘decedents’ (the French), as Americans still call their football championship ‘Super Bowl LV’. Massimo Gramellini, vice-director at *Corriere de la Sera*, pertinently remarks that “Roman numerals are a typical example of a cultural vicious circle: first, a cultural entity is no longer taught at school and, then, it is eliminated because people who ignore it feel uncomfortable”. It seems that a third museum, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, also planned to adopt this reform, but has back-tracked after public reactions, so that the much-anticipated exhibition of Flaubert’s *Salammbô* will use Roman numerals ... at least for the moment.

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*Sampled passage, plus brief comments shared by Terry Joyce*

Text is simply marvelous.

Text allows us to see, connect, transform, interact and freeze knowledge like no other medium. ... Text allows us to see different perspectives and grasp our knowledge in powerful ways.

Text gives us a fantastic ability to connect across space and time. Text derives its powerful richness to represent human thought not so much from the individual symbols but from how they interact—the interaction between the symbols and our interactions with them matters more than the individual.

Text allows us to freeze thought from the ever-shifting human mind as simple words or sophisticated statements use the power of compositional syntax. Digital text also allows us to unfreeze thought and to interact with it like it is a multidimensional sculpture in ways we cannot fully imagine until we actually use it. ...

Text is transformative. ... It takes the idea out of the soft mental presentation of thought and forces the author to really look at it to present it as a coherent thought

Hegland, Frode Alexander (2020). Introduction. In Frode Alexander Hegland (Ed.), *The future of text* (pp. 26–35). Future Text Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.48197/fot2020a>

Trusting that these few personal sketches about text tendered by Hegland (2020) are likely to deeply resonate with all readers of this newsletter (as a community of researchers dedicated to understanding written language), rather than intending to surprise anyone, they are shared here primarily in the hopes that they may pique your interest to check out (if not already discovered)

Hegland's edited book, *The future of text*. It brings together over 164 texts from different perspectives, including "technical texts and artistic texts, poetic texts and academic texts", reflecting on how humans have interacted with text in the past, on how we engage with text in the present, and, particularly, on how we might develop interactive texts in the future. More information about the Future of Text Initiative, which organizes a series of annual Symposium can be found at: <https://www.thefutureoftext.org/>

## Miscellaneous matters

### *Sundry information about related conferences, projects, etc.*

#### *Crucial Issues in Orthography Development*

This is the working title of a project, by Mike Cahill ([mike\\_cahill@sil.org](mailto:mike_cahill@sil.org)), to create a series of videos on developing orthographies for previously-unwritten languages. In being deliberately aimed at non-native English speakers, the 11~15 min. videos are carefully paced. Of the envisioned series of 22 videos, eight are currently available at the temporary URLs below. As some revisions are expected, Mike would appreciate feedback.

- |                                                                                |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Overview - Acceptability vs usability                                       | <a href="https://sho.co/1DHM5">https://sho.co/1DHM5</a>             |
| 2. Stakeholders 1                                                              | <a href="https://sho.co/1D94N">https://sho.co/1D94N</a>             |
| 3. Stakeholders 2                                                              | <a href="https://sho.co/1DADN">https://sho.co/1DADN</a>             |
| 4. It takes time: Stages of an orthography                                     | <a href="https://sho.co/1DA5V">https://sho.co/1DA5V</a>             |
| 5. Dialects                                                                    | <a href="https://sho.co/embed/1DL8X">https://sho.co/embed/1DL8X</a> |
| 6. Representing consonants and vowels, incl.<br>over- and under-representation | <a href="https://sho.co/1DDK0">https://sho.co/1DDK0</a>             |
| 7. Tone - Intro and lexical tone                                               | <a href="https://sho.co/1DV7I">https://sho.co/1DV7I</a>             |
| 8. Tone - grammatical                                                          | <a href="https://sho.co/1DU2I">https://sho.co/1DU2I</a>             |

#### *Design Regression*

Recently launched, mini journal publishing texts that are about design for reading and reading-related research. It aims for the hard-to-get blend of approachability with seriousness and relevance to practice.

<http://beta.designregression.com/>

#### *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century 2022*

Télécom Paris, Palaiseau, France; 8-10 June, 2022

<https://grafematik2022.sciencesconf.org/>

#### *Writing in the Ancient World (WAW)*

As an outreach venture of the CREWS Project (<https://crewsproject.wordpress.com/>), this programme is developing free resources for teaching and studying ancient writing. Although aimed mainly at ages 7-11 for use in classrooms, the various resources can be readily adapted for wider contexts.

<https://crewsproject.wordpress.com/writing-in-the-ancient-world/>



### **Recent publications by AWLL core community members**

The *Miscellaneous matters* section concludes with a list of recent publications (i.e., since the last newsletter) by AWLL community members, which is followed by ‘mini-flyers’ for three books.

AWLL mailing list is open to anyone interested in receiving occasional information emails, but the core community is based primarily on participation at AWLL workshops. All who participated at the three most recent workshops (AWLL10 in 2016, AWLL11 in 2017 and AWLL12 in 2019) are eligible to have a brief member profile 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>).

- Gnanadesikan, Amalia E. (2021). S<sub>1</sub>: The native script effect. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century: /gr̥afematik/ June 17–19, 2020. Proceedings, Part I* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 4) (pp. 103–123). Brest: Fluxus Editions.  
<https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf-gnan>
- Haralambous, Yannis, Landragin, Frédéric, & Handa, Kenichi. (2021). Graphemic and graphetic methods in speculative fiction. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century: /gr̥afematik/ June 17–19, 2020. Proceedings, Part I* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 4) (pp. 259–359). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf-hara>
- Honda, Keisuke. (2021). A modular theoretic approach to the Japanese writing system: Possibilities and challenges. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century: /gr̥afematik/ June 17–19, 2020. Proceedings, Part II* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 5) (pp. 621–643). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf-hond>
- Joyce, Terry, & Masuda, Hisashi. (2021). Constructing databases of Japanese three- and four-kanji compound words: Some observations concerning their morphological structures. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century: /gr̥afematik/ June 17–19, 2020. Proceedings, Part II* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 5) (pp. 579–619). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf-joyc>
- Judson, Anna P. (2020). Scribes as editors: tracking changes in the Linear B documents. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 124(4), 523–49. <https://doi.org/10.3764/aja.124.4.0523>; open access version: <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/310940>
- McCay, Kelly Minot. (2021). ‘All the world writes shorthand’: The phenomenon of shorthand in seventeenth-century England. *Book History*, 24, 1–36.
- Neef, Martin. (2021). The written utterance as a core concept in grapholinguistics. In Yannis Haralambous (Ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century: /gr̥afematik/ June 17–19, 2020. Proceedings, Part I* (Grapholinguistics and its applications 4) (pp. 1–24). Brest: Fluxus Editions. <https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf-neef>
- Ravid, D., & Schiff, R. (2021). Judging Hebrew adjective agreement across development: Syntactic and morpho-syntactic awareness. *Reading & Writing*, 34(1), 1–25.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10061-1>

Rimzhim, Anurag, Johri, Avantika, Kelty-Stephen, Damian G., & Fowler, Carol A. (2020).

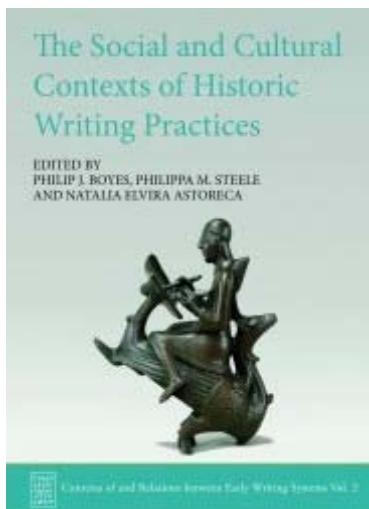
Transposition effects in an aksharic writing system: The case of Hindi. *Language and Speech*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0023830920971315>

Treiman, R., Jewell, R., Berg, K., & Aronoff, M. (2020). Word class and spelling in English. *Journal of*

*Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*. Advance online publication.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/xlm0000969>



Boyes, Philip J., Steele, Philippa M., & Elvira Astoreca, Natalia (Eds.). (2021). *The social and cultural contexts of historic writing practices*. Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books.

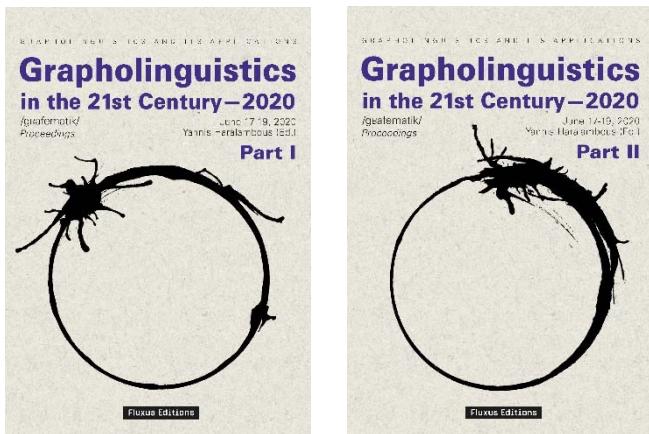
Open access publication:

<https://crewsproject.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/boyes-et-al-2021.pdf>

Publisher's website:

<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/the-social-and-cultural-contexts-of-historic-writing-practices-67151.html>

Writing is not just a set of systems for transcribing language and communicating meaning, but an important element of human practice, deeply embedded in the cultures where it is present and fundamentally interconnected with all other aspects of human life. *The Social and Cultural Contexts of Historic Writing Practices* explores these relationships in a number of different cultural contexts and from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including archaeological, anthropological and linguistic. It offers new ways of approaching the study of writing and integrating it into wider debates and discussions about culture, history and archaeology.



Haralambous, Yannis. (Ed.). *Grapholinguistics in the 21st Century, /græfəlɪŋwɪstɪk/, June 17-19, 2020 Proceedings Parts I & II*. Brest: Fluxus Editions.

<https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf1>

<https://doi.org/10.36824/2020-graf2>

Volumes 4 and 5 of the *Grapholinguistics and Its Applications* series comprise the first and second parts, respectively, of the *Proceedings of the Grapholinguistics in the 21st Century Conference*, which was held online from June 15 to June 17, 2020. This interdisciplinary conference brought

together researchers from various disciplines interested in writing, including linguists, computer scientists, typographers, font designers, psychologists, archeologists, educators, and others. Together the two Parts contain 42 papers, written by 62 authors, that cover a range of topics from theoretical aspects of grapholinguistics, to the history of writing systems, typographetics, graphemic and graphic methods in speculative fiction, sociolinguistics, emojis, communication with unknown intelligences, contemporary art, exotic scripts, sinographemics, written representation of sign languages, applications of computing, translation, conversion, confrontation of scripts, and magical writing.

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AWLL board

President: Terry Joyce; vice-presidents: Lynne Cahill & Dorit Ravid

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