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 11: 15 November 2021

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

The Japanese word 久しぶり /hisa.shi-bu-ri/ translates to something like *'it's been a long time'* (often used when meeting someone not seen in a while). As the last in-person gathering of AWLL12 at Cambridge University was back in March 2019, it certainly captures one of the many strong sentiments that I experienced during the recent online convening of AWLL13 a little over three weeks ago. However, although also undeniably tinged with some sense of regret at not being an in-person gathering, my emotions during AWLL13-Online were overwhelmingly positive ones; from the pleasures of being able to connect again, albeit only *virtually* and briefly, with so many close colleagues, together with deep appreciation both for all the interesting presentations given and for the convivial engagement with them from all participants and, of course, the immense relief that things generally went so smoothly!

Also reflecting the gap since AWLL12, this eleventh AWLL newsletter (NL11) is the first since NL6 (15 May 2019) to include, as its main feature, a report from AWLL13-Online's local organizer, David Mora-Marín. It also has a project report from Sonali Nag about TalkTogether's virtual round table event on child-directed print corpora. The regular section of *Introducing writing systems: Japanese* continues with its ninth instalment, starting a new mini-block on the syllabographic kana scripts; the *Thought-provoking quotations and observations* section has a single item; and the *Miscellaneous matters* section has brief information about some upcoming conferences as well as a short list of recent publications by AWLL community members.

As always, I very much hope that NL11 might 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

Conference report: AWLL13-Online [David Mora-Marín: Local organizer]

made by Terry Joyce

The 13th meeting of the Association for Written Language and Literacy, focusing *On the systematic nature of writing systems*, took place over 21st-23rd October 2021 as an online event hosted by David Mora-Marín from the Faculty of Linguistics, University of North Carolina. Although AWLL13 was convened online (as an unavoidable consequence of the ongoing corona virus pandemic) and was, thus, somewhat scaled-down in nature compared to previous AWLL gatherings (in consideration of various factors, such as limiting zoom fatigue and different time-zones, primarily between US and Europe), still, it consisted of 27 oral and poster presentations in total.

Consistent with its online format, naturally, participant numbers varied across the sessions, but over the three days, a total of 91 participants joined the zoom meetings, with 31 (34%) attending for one day, 26 (29%) for two days, and 34 (37%) for all three days.   As such, participant numbers for all sessions were generally quite consistent and robust, with an average of 41 participants per session (average numbers ranging from 32 to 54).   Moreover, notwithstanding the considerable time differences involved, AWLL13-Online brought together participants from 21 countries around the world; from Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

Reflecting the diverse interdisciplinary scope of AWLL gatherings, AWLL13 was privileged to have two renowned scholars of writing systems and reading research, respectively, give keynote presentations.   The first by Peter T. Daniels was entitled *When is non-writing writing? or, when is writing non-writing?* and the second by Min Wang was *Phonology beyond phoneme: Contribution of suprasegmental information to reading*.   Moreover, to mark the occasion of AWLL13 being the first AWLL gathering to be hosted from the United States (even though convened online), its themed symposium session focused on the *Writing systems of the Americas*: Michael Carrasco and Joshua Englehardt presented on writing systems in Ancient Mesoamerica; Tomi S. Melka and Robert M. Schoch asked whether the *T'oqapu* patterns of Inqa textiles constitute a writing system; Alice B. Kasakoff; Bill Proudfit; John Justeson shared the notes of John W. Adams concerning Gitksan crests, potlatching, and law; and David Mora-Marín surveyed the systematic spelling practices and conventions in Mayan writing.   Highly pertinent to AWLL13's theme-focus on the systematic

nature of writing systems, a number of the presentations addressed some of the thorny issues surrounding the typology of writing systems, such as their classification, the terminology and the complexity of the Japanese writing system. Equally relevant to the theme, many others tackled various orthography or spelling related topics, such as sociolinguistic factors for new orthographies, the orthographic chasm, segments and syllables, Hangeul reform proposals, affix spelling in Hebrew, contemporary German orthography, standardized spellings in Middle English, and alphabet systemization in North Italic writing.

This brief report of the AWLL13-Online conference ends by acknowledging various forms of generous support received. Firstly, a number of academic units at the University of North Carolina provided funding support, including Archaeology Curriculum, Carolina Asia Center, Department of Anthropology, Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Department of Asian Studies, Department of Classics, Department of Linguistics, Department of Romance Languages, and Institute for the Study of the Americas. Secondly, thanks are extended to my graduate-student team of Andrew Knudsen and Jolie Hiers for all their work and support. Finally, sincere appreciation is extended to all the participants who enthusiastically contributed to making AWLL13-Online a positive and meaningful experience.

Programme + abstracts PDF is available at:

http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/ws/13/ 2021-ProgrammeAbstracts.pdf

Recordings of all AWLL13-Online presentations are available at:

http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/ws/13/2021-HP.html

Screen captures of presenters and their title slides are available at:

http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/ws/13/2021-Album.html

Project report: A virtual round table on child-directed print corpora [Sonali Nag]

A powerful way to ensure all children are ready for learning, particularly in school, is to offer rich language early in a child's life. TalkTogether is using research to inform the development of a range of resources to assist with this.

The recent virtual round table event aimed to understand the promise of child-directed print corpora for child language assessment, experimental research, and the development of children's materials. It also discussed how corpora can support theorising on child language acquisition. Catering to a broad audience, the roundtable considered the usefulness of corpora for researchers, practitioners and their trainers, and curriculum developers.

For the TalkTogether team - comprising The Department of Education at the University of Oxford, the University of the Philippines, The Promise Foundation (India), the Interactive Children's Literacy Programme (the Philippines) and Georgia State University (USA) - this event was a showcase of research work conducted over 2020-21. Some 19 talks were given by 28 researchers from 9 countries, representing 10 universities and 1 NGO, and featuring 4 languages: Kannada, Filipino, English, and Malay.

Open source protocols and public archives of the Asian language corpora will be released in the coming months. These may be of particular interest to people working in understudied languages who may want to develop their own child-directed print corpora, and quickly develop useful information such as book levels, age of acquisition and affix mapping. The aim is to encourage more such research infrastructure worldwide to develop resources for supporting children's oral language development.

For more information and to see the event brochure please visit the TalkTogether website:

https://talktogether.web.ox.ac.uk/2021-corpus-roundtable

Watch the TalkTogether 2021 Corpus Roundtable here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLODT6q8rLrJftQ8Ih4xD-rsB5pvXTUHr_

Introducing writing systems: Japanese [9] [Terry Joyce & Keisuke Honda]

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the Japanese writing system (JWS) is its simultaneous use of multiple scripts, which, in Japanese, is referred to as 漢字仮名交じり文 /KAN-JI-KA-NA-MA.ji-ri.BUN/ 'mixed kanji and kana writing' (Honda, 2011; Joyce & Masuda, 2018). The primary component script is morphographic kanji that has, justifiably, been the focus of this introductory series so far, but we now begin a new mini-series focusing on the JWS's two syllabographic 仮名 /KA-NA/ 'kana' scripts. More specifically, after briefly explaining how both were independently derived from the phonographic use of kanji this time, the next couple of instalments will describe the two syllabographic sets and their conventions of graphematic representation, respectively.

As noted at the end of the previous instalment, although Japan's two indigenous kana scripts emerged along separate paths in the ninth century, both originated out of the same basic approach to using kanji as phonographs; namely, using a kanji primarily for its phonetic value with little or no reference to its semantic value. Analogous to how the Chinese graphematically represented foreign names, this phonographic strategy was employed in the 万葉集 /MAN-YŌ-SHŪ/, an anthology of Japanese verse compiled towards the end of the eight century CE. Retrospectively, the term 万葉仮名 /MAN-YŌ-GA-NA/ 'man'yōgana' has often been applied to the diverse set of kanji used as phonograms at that time (Lurie 2012; Miller 1967; Shibatani 1990).

The contemporary set of 片仮名 /KATA-KA-NA/ 'katakana' [part; side + kana] is quite angular in appearance and developed out of the scribal practices of Buddhist priests engaged in textual studies. Over time, the reading conventions, known as 訓読 /KUN-DOKU/ 'gloss reading of Chinese texts,' came to involve the annotation of Chinese texts with man'yōgana to indicate pronunciations and Japanese grammatical elements. However, due to certain constraints, such as the limited space between the lines of text, there was a tendency to abbreviate a man'yōgana by typically emphasizing a distinctive element. For example, as included within the ten katakana examples below, the modern katakana sign カ /ka/ comes from writing just the first component of the man'yōgana 加 as an abbreviation for the whole.

	a	i	u	e	o	ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
Man'yōgana	阿	伊	宇	江	於	加	機	久	介	己
Katakana	ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ

Ten katakana signs (five vowels (V) and five k-V signs) derived from man'yōgana

In contrast, the contemporary set of 平仮名 /HIRA-GA-NA/ 'hiragana' [plain + kana] is more cursive in appearance reflecting their evolution through distinct stages of cursive writing. By the early Heian period (794-1185), man'yōgana were also being written in a cursive hand, known as 草仮名 /SŌ-GA-NA/ 'grass style', with modern hiragana representing a further stage of cursive simplification of sōgana signs. For example, as included within the ten hiragana examples below,[1] the modern hiragana sign か /ka/ is also ultimately derived from the man'yōgana 加 via an intermediate sōgana form, with an enlarged first element offset from a considerably reduced second element. As a consequence of these successive stages of cursive simplification, contemporary hiragana forms often bear little resemblance to the original man'yōgana (Habein, 1984).

	a	i	u	e	o	ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
Man'yōgana	安	以	宇	衣	於	加	機	久	計	己
Hiragana	あ	い	う	え	お	か	き	く	け	こ

Ten hiragana signs (five vowels (V) and five k-V signs) derived from man'yōgana

Although both kana scripts are capable of graphematically representing the sounds of the Japanese language, crucially, rather than becoming completely autonomous and replacing kanji, they have become complementary components of the contemporary JWS. After describing the two syllabogram sets and their generally consistent correspondences to Japanese syllables (mora) in a little more detail next time, the subsequent instalment will illustrate with examples the conventions of graphematic representation that underlie their essentially differentiated usages.

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[1]Although different kanji have been used as man'yōgana to represent the same sound, over time, a degree of standardization occurred, so some modern hiragana and katakana are derived from the same man'yōgana (e.g., 宇 /u/ for both katakana ウ and hiragana う), but in other cases, corresponding hiragana and katana signs are based on different man'yōgana (e.g., 阿 /a/ for katakana ア versus 安 for hiragana あ).

Thought-provoking quotations and observations [11]

Musings on a chapter section shared by Terry Joyce

Early within his 19-page chapter on *Language planning: Graphization and the development of writing systems*, Haarmann (2006) defines the 'modern term' *graphization* as referring "to the first application of a repertory of graphic signs to language in a culturally specific environment to facilitate the preservation of both information and knowledge-construction" (p. 2403) and further remarks that it is generally associated with orthography creation; specifying a writing system for an as yet unwritten language. Haarmann's chapter essentially consists of two main sections; §3 *Parameters of graphization as a planning activity*, which contains seven sub-sections, and §4 *Trends of graphization in the processes of historical and modern language planning*, which has two sub-sections on the historical creation of the Hangul (pp. 2409-2413) and on the alphabetization policies of the former Soviet Union (pp. 2413-2417), respectively.

More specifically, in §3.7 *Graphization and the quarry principle*, Haarmann (2006) contends that:

The graphic inventories of the Phoenician and Greek alphabets with their multiple sources illustrate the working of a specific principle which has been termed "quarry principle" (*Steinbruchprinzip* in German) (Haarmann 1994). Where, in the milieu of a multicultural contact region, various older scripts have been in use, there is a great probability that new writing systems draw on various alternative sources for the elaboration of their graphic inventory rather than on one only. (p. 2408)

Haarmann continues to claim that many of the world's writing systems have drawn their sign inventories from multiple sources; an observation that seems to warrant greater consideration for its wider implications, as encapsulated within the section's sentences:

In an overall perspective, the quarry principle illustrates how the human mind reworks the visual impressions of its cultural environment. Visual signs of various domains – literacy-oriented or not – may fuse in the process of elaborating a new system, regardless of whether it is an original script or a derivation from one. (p. 2408)

Haarmann, Harald (2006). Language planning: Graphization and the development of writing systems [Sprachplanung: Graphisation und die Entwicklung von Schreibsystemen]. In Ulrich Ammon, Norbert Dittmar, Klaus J. Mattheier, & Peter Trudgill (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: An international handbook of the science of language and society* [Ein internationales Handbuch zur Wissenschaft von Sprache und Gesellschaft] (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistic and Communication Science 3.3) (pp. 2402–2420). Berlin: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110184181.3.11.2402

Miscellaneous matters

Information about upcoming conferences, events, special issues

Writing around the Ancient Mediterranean: Practices and Adaptations
Third CREWS project conference: 18-19 November 2021
To register for online conference, email crews@classics.cam.ac.uk
Programme: https://crewsproject.wordpress.com/wampa/

'Writing: System, use, ideology' workshop at 46th Austrian Linguistics Conference
Online workshop: 9-10 December 2021
Workshop organizer: Dimitrios Meletis
Conference registration (free): https://oelt2021.univie.ac.at/anmeldung/
Zoom link will be available at conference website (https://oelt2021.univie.ac.at/)
Program: https://meletis.at/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Writing_OELT_ProgramAbstracts.pdf

Morphology in production and perception: Phonetics, phonology and spelling of complex words
Düsseldorf, Germany; 7-9 Feb 2022
Contact Person: Ingo Plag
Website: https://mpp2022.phil.hhu.de/

The graphematics/pragmatics interface (DGfS 2022)
Tübingen, Germany; 24-25 Feb 2022
Contact Person: Mailin Antomo
Website: http://www.dgfs2022.uni-tuebingen.de

The Wor(l)ds of Linear A: An integrated approach to Linear A documents and script
Virtual conference: Proposed dates 24-26 May 2022
Conference organizer: Ester Salgarella
lineara2022@gmail.com

Grapholinguistics in the 21st Century
Palaiseau, France: 8-10 Jun 2022
Contact Person: Yannis Haralambous
Website: https://grafematik2022.sciencesconf.org

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Recent publications by AWLL 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 a 'mini-flyer' for one book.

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 recent workshops 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

Haralambous, Yannis. (2021). Breaking Arabic: the creative inventiveness of Uyghur script reforms. *Design Regression.* https://designregression.com/article/breaking-arabic

Meletis, Dimitrios. (2021). 'Is your font racist?' Metapragmatic online discourses on the use of typographic mimicry and its appropriateness. *Social Semiotics.* https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2021.1989296.

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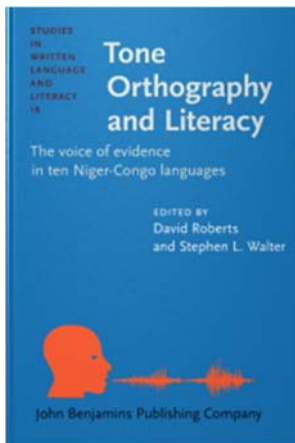
Roberts, David, & Walter, Stephen L. (Eds.). (2021). *Tone orthography and literacy* (Studies in Written Language and Literacy 18). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

For further details, see https://benjamins.com/catalog/swll.18

This book presents the results of a series of literacy experiments in ten Niger-Congo languages, representing four language families and spanning five countries. It asks the research question, "To what extent does full tone marking contribute to oral reading fluency, comprehension and writing accuracy, and does that contribution vary from language to language?". One of the main findings is that the ethno-literacy profile of the language community and the social profile of the individual are stronger predictors of reading and writing performance than are the linguistic and orthographic profiles of the language. Our data also suggest that full tone marking may be more beneficial for less educated readers and those with less experience of L1 literacy. The book will bring practical help to linguists and literacy specialists in Africa and beyond who are helping to develop orthographies for tone languages. It will also be of interest to cognitive psychologists exploring the reading process, and researchers investigating writing systems.

AWLL board

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

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

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