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Types of ‘logography’ in the Japanese writing system

Keisuke Honda

kdhonda@gmail.com

Imperial College London & University of Oxford

Introduction

About this presentation

Background

Place and nature of 'logography' in the current Japanese writing system (JWS)

- Traditionally seen as a key principle underlying JWS
- Increasingly superseded by the term 'morphography'
- Problem: Lack of terminological and conceptual clarity

Goal

A refined account of 'logography' in the JWS

- To distinguish two types of 'logography'
- To characterise 'morphography' as a subtype
- To call for a better terminology

→ Towards a better account of JWS

1. JWS and 'logography'

JWS: An overview

Language

- Multi-layered lexicon (Native, Sino-Japanese, Foreign)
- Rich morphology (affixation, compounding, reduplication, clipping)

Scripts & orthographies

- Scripts for different functions (**kanji**, **hiragana**, **katakana**, **rōmaji** & other)
- Orthographic conventions for different scripts (non-binding guidelines)

KA.	HI.	RŌ.	HI.	KAN.	HI.	PUNCT.
ロンドン	に	Marugame Udon	が	開店	した	。
rondon	ni	marugame+udon	ga	kai+ten	shi-ta	.
London	LOC	PN	NOM	open+shop	do-PAST·AFF	
'Marugame Udon (noodle restaurant) opened in London.'						

JWS: An overview

Grapholinguistic accounts

- Non-phonographic kanji + phonographic hiragana, katakana, rōmaji
- Lack of uniform term & conceptual clarity for non-phonography

Common designations & their problems

- 'Logography': Wide variety of definitions (Osterkamp & Schreiber 2021a)
- 'Morphography': Some underexplored issues (Honda 2019)

Discussion

- 'Logography' → Part 2
- 'Morphography' → Part 3

Honda, K. 2019. What do kanji graphs represent in the current Japanese writing system? Towards a unified model of kanji as written signs. In Haralambous, Y. (ed.), *Graphemics in the 21st Century: Brest, June 13-15, 2018*. 185-208. Brest: Fluxus Editions.

Osterkamp, S. & Schreiber, G. 2021a. Challenging the dichotomy between phonography and morphography: Transitions and gray areas. In Haralambous, Y. (ed.), *Grapholinguistics in the 21st century 2020: Proceedings*. 47-82. Brest: Fluxus Editions.

2. Two types of 'logography'

Definitions of 'logography'

Classical (e.g. Sampson 1985; cf. 2015)

- Graph representing word/morpheme
- Differentiation of homophones
- Morphological constancy

Alternative

- Graph representing morpheme (e.g. Taylor & Taylor 2014)
- Graphic encoding of non-phon. info. (Sproat 2000)
- Graphic repr. of words in any WS (Kōno 1994)

Daniels, P. T. & W. Bright (eds.). 1996. *The world's writing systems*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kōno, R. 1994. Moji no honshitsu. In Kōno, R., *Mojiron*. 1-24. Tokyo: Sanseidō.

Sampson, G. 1985. *Writing systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

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Sproat, R. 2000. *A computational theory of writing systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, I. & Taylor, M. M. 2014. *Writing and literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Examples of 'logography' in JWS

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ENG <£> *pound(+s)*

Kan. <愛> *ai* 'love' (Sino-Japanese)

<恋> *koi* 'romance' (Native Japanese)

<杯> *saka+zuki* 'drinking cup' (NJ)

<掌> *te=no hira* 'palm' (NJ)

Hi. <を> *o* 'ACCUSATIVE'

Rō. <G> *gokiburi* 'cockroach' (?)

<W C> *toire* 'toilet'

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ENG <rite> ≠ <right> ≠ <write> ...

Kan. <愛> *ai* 'love' (Sino-Japanese)
<藍> *ai* 'indigo' (Native Japanese)

<時計> *tokei* 'timepiece' (clock)
<土圭> *tokei* 'timepiece' (sundial)

Hi. <おう> *ō* 'yea'
<おお> *ō* 'oh'

Ka. <バレー> *barē* 'volleyball'
<バレエ> *barē* 'ballet'

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ENG <telegraph(ø/-y/-ic)>

Kan.(?) <酒 粕> *sake*u+*kasu* 'rice wine lees'

<酒 屋> *saka*a+*ya* 'liquour shop'

<煮 酒> *ni*+*zake* 'cooking wine'

<居 酒 屋> *i*+*zaka*a+*ya* 'tavern'

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CHN <十> *shí* 'ten'

Kan. <愛> *ai* 'love' (Sino-Japanese)

<恋> *koi* 'romance' (Native Japanese)

<杯> *saka+zuki* 'drinking cup' (NJ)

<掌> *te=no hira* 'palm' (NJ)

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CHN <檳榔> *bīnláng* 'betel'

<賓> *bīn* + no meaning

<郎> *láng* + no meaning

<木> no sound + 'betel'

Kan. <檳榔> *binrō* 'betel'

<賓> *bin* + no meaning

<郎> *rō* + no meaning

<木> no sound + 'betel'

'Radical harmony' (Cornelia Schindelin, p.c.)

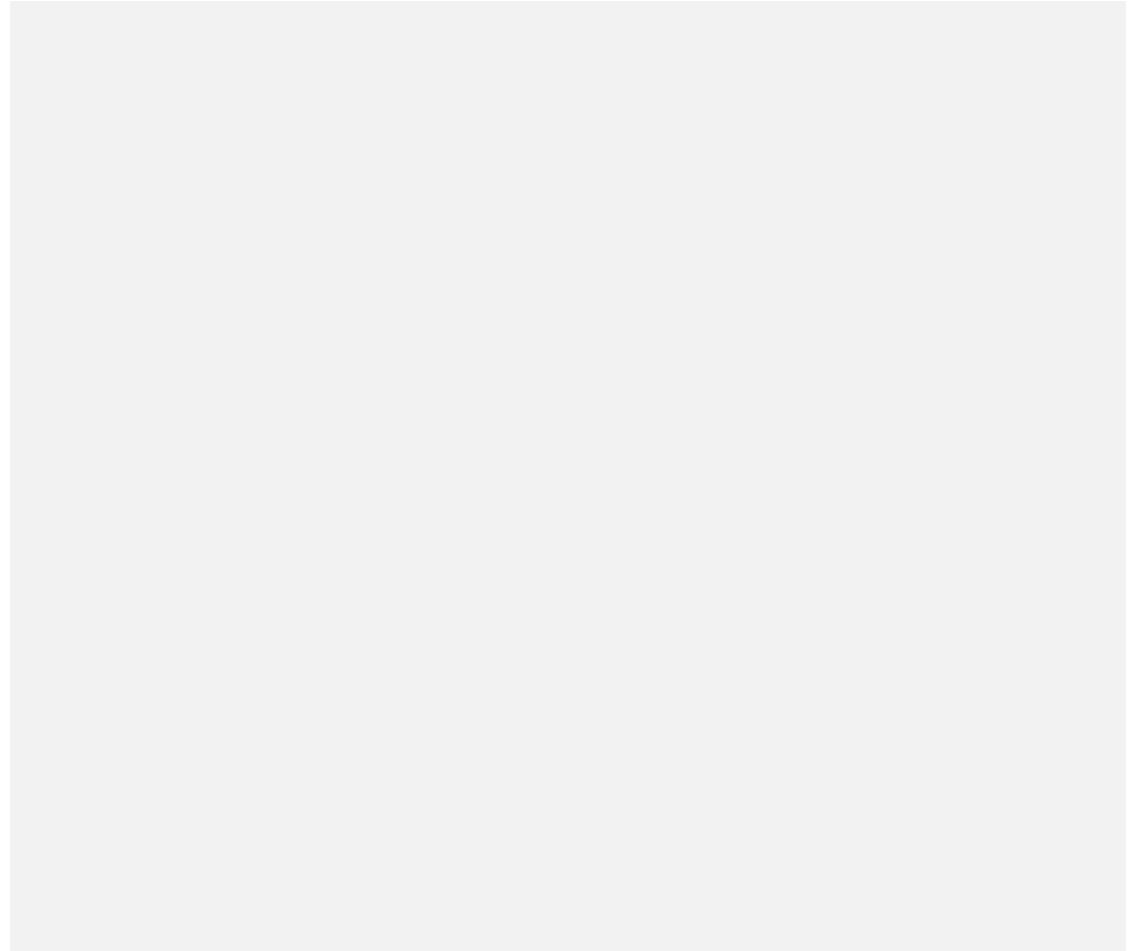
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Classification of 'logography' in JWS

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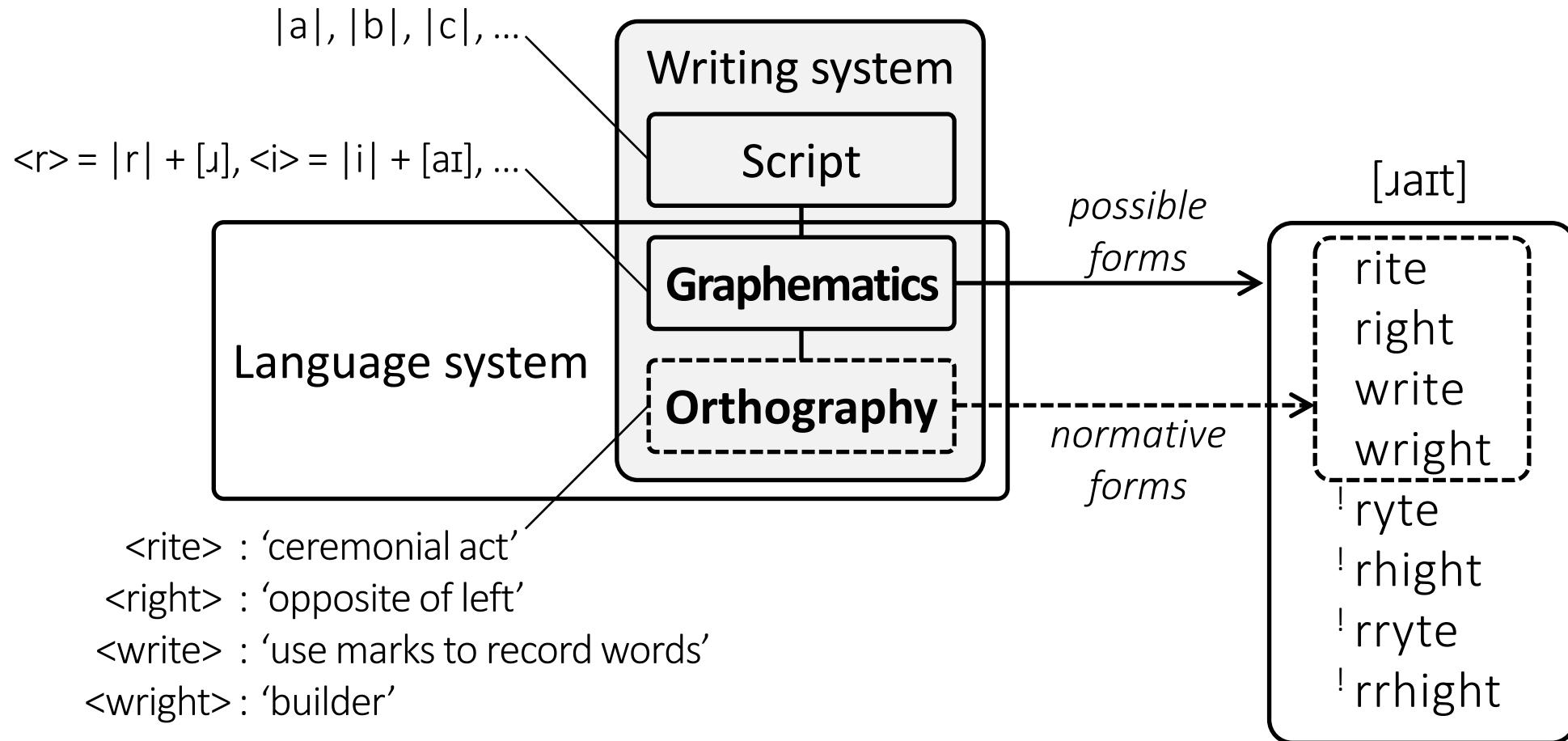
**Lexically conditioned
formation of signs**

**Lexically conditioned
representation of words**

Framework to capture the
similarity and difference?

Classification of 'logography' in JWS

Multimodular model of WSs (Neef 2015; Meletis 2020)



Classification of 'logography' in JWS

'Graphematic logography'

- Morpheme-based: <愛>, <檳榔>, <を>, <G>, <WC>, ...
- Word-based: <杯>, <釉> *uwa+gusuri* 'glaze', <廳> *matsuri+goto+dono* 'govt. office', ...
- Phrase-based: <掌> (and possibly others)

'Orthographic logography'

- Conditioned: <バレエ>, <時計>, <土圭>, ...
- Unconditioned: <バレー>, ...

Cf. Phonography

- Phoneme-based: <a>, , <ch>, ...
- Mora-based: <あ>, <き>, <ん>, ...

3. Morphography as a subtype of 'logography'

Definition of morphography

Morphograph (Joyce 2011)

- Graph representing a morpheme
 - Morpheme: Minimal meaningful form in a language
 - Word: Monomorphemic / polymorphemic
- Graphs arranged according to word's morphological structure

Morphographic WS

- WS is based on morphology if not based on phonology (Hill 1967; Joyce 2011)
- 'Logography' is a misnomer (Joyce 2011)
 - Morpho-: Graphs represent morphemes
 - Logo-: Graphs represent morphemes / polymorphemic words
- All WSs have different amounts of morphography (Rogers 2005; cf. Joyce 2011)

Morphography as a subtype of 'graphematic logography'

'Graphematic logography'

✓ Morpheme-based: <愛>, <檳榔>, <を>, <G>, <WC>, ...

✗ Word-based: <杯>, <釉> *uwa+gusuri* 'glaze', <廳> *matsuri+goto+dono* 'govt. office', ...

✗ Phrase-based: <掌> (and possibly others)

'Orthographic logography'

? Conditioned: <バレエ>, <時計>, <土圭>, ...

? Unconditioned: <バレー>, ...

'Exceptional' kanji usage (Joyce 2011; Honda 2019)

? Rebus, polygraphs, semantically opaque compounds, proper nouns, etc.

? Type vs token

Need for an elaborate discussion

Transitions (Handel 2019; Osterkamp & Schreiber 2021a)

- CHN [Logographic → Morphographic] → JPN [Morphographic?]
- Graph [Morphographic ⇔ Phonographic]

Mapping types (Honda 2019; Osterkamp & Schreiber 2021b)

- Monographic [1:1]: <愛> *ai* 'love'
- Polygraphic [2:1]: <檳榔> *binrō* 'betel'

Universals and idiosyncrasies

- Comparative (e.g. Chinese)
- Contrastive (e.g. Akkadian)
- Typological (e.g. Non-phonography vs phonography)

Handel, Z. 2019. *Sinography: The borrowing and adaptation of the Chinese script*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

Honda, K. 2019. What do kanji graphs represent in the current Japanese writing system? Towards a unified model of kanji as written signs. In Haralambous, Y. (ed.), *Graphemics in the 21st Century: Brest, June 13-15, 2018*. 185-208. Brest: Fluxus Editions.

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Need for a better terminology

Possible approaches

- Redefinition: e.g. 'Logography' as non-phonography
- Redesignation: e.g. 'Morphography' (with further refinement)
'Pleremic' vs 'cenemic' (Haas 1983; Bekeš 2013)

Insights from a broader perspective

- Comparative (e.g. Chinese)
- Contrastive (e.g. Akkadian)
- Typological (e.g. Non-phonography vs phonography)

4. Conclusion

Summary

Proposals for a refined account of 'logography' in JWS

- To distinguish two types, tentatively 'graphematic' and 'orthographic'
- To characterise 'morphography' as a subtype of 'graphematic logography'
- To call for a better terminology (redefinition / redesignation)

→ **Towards a better account of JWS**

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Thank you for your attention.

ご清聴ありがとうございました。