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[Name]

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: Scripting Japan

Subtitle: Orthography, Variation, and the Creation of Meaning in Written Japanese

Author: Wesley C. Robertson

Discipline: Japanese Studies/Sociolinguistics

RATIONALE

1. Why do you think that there is a need for this book? Please provide a brief outline of the current context to your book, explaining – if relevant – how and why recent changes may have taken place to make your book more relevant now than ever before.

As the importance of written communication to our daily lives continues to increase, with texting, instant messaging, web forums and email making writing a major aspect of how we regularly interact with others, understanding how language users create meaning through variation inherent to the written mode has become more important than ever. Nowhere is this more relevant than in written Japanese, as graphic variation is not simply something made possible by digital communication. Rather, it stands as a recognized practice dating back over thousands of years, with digital avenues opening new places for language play in addition to new practices.

Historically, Japanese script variation was limited in presence and relevance. Prior discussions of the phenomenon are restricted to its appearance in poetry, advertising, and certain stylistic practices, and have not discussed it as part of regular communication. However, over the last decades studies have made it clear that graphic variation is now a regular aspect of writing for most Japanese. Indeed, within more casual or creative mediums nonstandard script use is perhaps the norm, with strict adherence to standard orthography the more surprising choice. Without engaging with the motives behind these contemporary script practices, we therefore are overlooking a major element of language use in contemporary Japanese. Simply put, a lack of awareness regarding both common types of marked script use and the motives behind them limits the ability of Japanese learners, translators, and linguists to fully understand the importance of a major modern practice, and denies us access to the totality of authors' intents.

Additionally, the timing of this book is well suited in relation to more global developments in language study. Over the last decade, sociolinguistic study of language variation has turned its eye to variation inherent to the written mode, and begun to evidence that social values can be attached to styles of language representation. Decades ago, the idea that written variation could be a socially meaningful channel for communication may have been surprising, if not controversial. However, as seen in the publication of books like Mark Sebba's *Spelling and Society* (2007, Cambridge University Press), or articles on the ideological connections between language use and script practice in major journals like *Language & Communication*, *Written Language & Literacy*, *The Journal of Sociolinguistics*, and *Written Communication*, a large body of research has evidenced a clear social importance of orthographic choice. Despite Japanese having one of the largest and most active venues for graphic language play, it has not yet been targeted by these new discussions, with the findings of the book therefore poised to also have important implications for a major area of contemporary linguistic study around the world.

2. How long would it remain up-to-date?

As this study examines the fundamental processes behind a language practice, the more basic findings are unlikely to ever go out of date. Certainly, the way specific language variants are perceived or used may change over time, but this will affect future language practices rather than override or disprove those analyzed in this book. Additionally, even in the case of significant social change, the text's role as a historical document will assist future researchers in tracing the development of new practices which utilize or draw upon existing forms.

SYNOPSIS

3. Please attach a synopsis, stating the mission and scope of the book. This should include:

This book addresses a long running gap in our understanding of as a major element of contemporary written Japanese: the variant use of script. Written Japanese is unique amongst writing systems in the world in that even standard writing requires an interplay of three distinct scripts. In some ways, this interplay is equivalent to the use of case in English, as different ways of representing language have distinct roles in the writing process. However, Japanese script use is more complex in terms of both the number of variants used and the frequency that switches occur. For instance, even a simple sentence like 私はアメリカ人です (*watashi wa amerika jin desu*, I am an American) requires an author to move from the kanji script (私) to the hiragana script (は) to the katakana script (アメリカ), and then back to kanji (人) and hiragana (です), switching scripts five times throughout the sentence.

Although the use of these scripts is fairly regular in formal writing, the fact that any sentence element can be written in any script opens the door for a staggering amount of graphic play. Consider the word *amerika* (America), which was written normatively in katakana (as アメリカ) in the paragraph above. Although katakana is the standard script for *amerika* because *amerika* is a loan word, the term can also be written in kanji as 亜米利加, in hiragana as あめりか, or even (quite unnaturally) in some combination of all three as in あ米りか if an author is so inclined. Furthermore, this variation is not simply a hypothetical, but something that has arguably existed throughout the history of written Japanese. With the contemporary prevalence of creative or playful avenues for writing, such as comics, online communication, and text messages, the presence of script play has grown exponentially, becoming highly relevant to readers' daily lives and language practices.

However, the broad recognition of Japanese script variation itself belies a lack of in-depth analysis of the effect it has on the meaning of a language act or text. Generally speaking,

prior discussions of the relationship between script choice and meaning have limited themselves to very static or functionalist descriptions. Here, established perceptions of each script are used to explain a script's marked use. For instance, studies have shown that hiragana is seen as "cute" compared to kanji or katakana, and researchers use this to argue that marked uses of hiragana they find are intended to be "cute". These explanations are not necessarily wrong, but they occur in a top-down manner that relies more on author interpretation than emergent analysis of the data in context. They also show a distinct lack of engagement with almost thirty years of sociolinguistic developments in our understanding of how meaning is created through language variation. To explain by analogy, just as knowing that swear words are seen as vulgar does not explain the totality of motives for their use to replace non-vulgar terms (as in using "shit" instead of "stuff"), images of scripts in the abstract are not inherently explanations for variant script use in practice. Simply put, the top-down method of analysis in prior studies is therefore unable to provide more than a cursory explanation of script play in Japan. This prevents our understanding of the practice from achieving the level of depth necessary to fully explain the motives behind it, or assist others in using it for their own communicative needs.

In the studies throughout this book, I apply sociolinguist perspectives and methodologies to the study of Japanese script variation for the first time. Rather than examining specific marked script selections as fossilized methods of marking a particular effect, I instead look at variant script use as a potential social practice. That is, as a negotiated linguistic resource which can only be understood by attending to both language ideologies and context of use. Furthermore, I also analyze Japanese script selection by relying on more holistic methodologies and data collection methods than prior studies. In earlier research, data was taken from individual instances of marked script use found in magazines or other commercial texts. The book instead includes studies which look at how authors use script variation to convey information about language acts across entire texts, using the norms of the texts themselves to defined "standardness", as well as metalinguistic surveys on how readers attend to variants they encounter. The ultimate result of these investigations is an understanding of orthographic variation as a social practice in Japan which allows us to access the multitude of factors that explain any particular selection's interpretation or use. While prior discussions of script perceptions are not irrelevant to this understanding, they fail to access the nuances of what this text finds authors using script to convey, or the complex interactions between language ideology, script play, and context seen to influence how styles of variation is perceived. Japanese script play is evidenced to function in a manner quite like variation between style, vocabulary, or register in speech, with even adherence to standard Japanese script use shown to be a potentially meaningful social act.

The various chapters of the monograph are currently broken down as follows:

Chapter 1: Scripting Japan

In this chapter, I introduce the goals of this book, and define nonstandard orthographic practice in contemporary Japan. The first part of this chapter serves as a background to written Japanese and the book itself, assisting readers in understanding why Japanese script selection demands further study despite decades of academic attention. After providing this overview of the study's goals, I then begin the body of the chapter by explaining the interplay of hiragana, katakana, and kanji inherent to standard written Japanese. This overview serves to both define the fundamental presence of script selection in Japanese and introduce the writing system to non-Japanese readers, ensuring that they can also follow the analysis and arguments throughout the text. I then explain so-called "nonstandard" script use as a phenomenon in contemporary written Japanese. This includes covering known causes of the phenomenon, introducing the idea that some variation is intended to influence the meaning of language acts, and establishing the limitations in our understanding that this book intends to address. I close the chapter by explaining how I attend to address the aforementioned limitations in this text.

Chapter 2: Graphic Play as a Social Act - Indexicality and Orthographic Variation

This chapter begins by explaining the sociolinguistic perspectives that motivate the methodology and design of the studies throughout the rest of the book. This explanation is a broad overview by design, and intended to provide non-linguists with the same assistance that Chapter 1 provided to non-Japanese speakers. Once this introduction is complete, I move to the chapter's larger goal: establishing that variation inherent to the written mode can serve as a socially meaningful act. To do this, I survey how graphic styles of variation like handwriting, font, and, indeed, script have become linked to social groups and ideologies around the world. In closing the chapter, I then provide original research on the social use of alternating case as a marker of both interactional stances and subcultural identity in English online forums, evidencing that graphic play can even serve as a relevant channel for meaning making between and across local interactional acts. Taken together, these two sections provide support for my claims that sociolinguistic perspectives have value in analyzing variation in Japanese script despite no explicit prior use of indexicality to understand the phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Scripted Speech and Scripted Speakers - Katakana and Non-Native Japanese

In Chapter 3, I begin my sociolinguistic analysis of variant script use in Japanese. The data in this chapter relates to a commonly recognized form of marked script use in Japan: katakana-heavy or katakana-only writing within representations of non-native Japanese speech. At the start of the chapter I present contemporary examples of the phenomenon, and show how major social dialogues in Japan generally treat it as a direct marker of accent or stilted Japanese speech. I then move to examining the katakana use found throughout the dialogue of non-native Japanese speakers in three series of Japanese manga (comics). The methodology utilizes a bottom-up analysis of the contexts where katakana marking occurs in each manga to see whether poor or marked Japanese production actually stands as the primary motivator of this marked form of script use. While Japanese ability is found to be relevant to each author's locally marked uses of katakana, it is not enough to fully explain their applications of the script. Rather, the marking is found to link more specifically to an ideologically-defined "non-native speaker" identity, one which possesses both linguistic limitations and certain behavioral traits. Consequently, although all three authors employ the same technique, the specifics of what they intend it to convey differ in relation to their conception of this identity, with attention to both contextual employment and ideologies about non-native speakers in Japan necessary to grasp the motives behind any particular application of this technique.

This chapter contains data that was discussed in my 2015 article "Orthography, foreigners, and fluency: indexicality and script selection in Japanese manga" published in *Japanese Studies*, 35(2). I obtained permission to reuse this data, with some excerpts presented in both the article and book. However, the chapter contains no self-plagiarism. The argumentation is also entirely new, as it adds new data and focuses directly on of katakana marking as a social practice rather than the article's more general interest in variation between all three scripts.

Chapter 4: The Orthography of Speech - Indexing Stance and Identity through Script

This chapter builds on Chapter 3, looking at variation between all three Japanese scripts within the representation of native speakers' dialogue in two manga. As the chapter uses data from large corpuses created by coding the representation of every word in each text, analysis can use local definitions of nonstandardness to establish marked applications of script. The data is examined by looking for contexts where locally marked use of a single script repeatedly occurs, and treating these contexts as triggers which provide insight into what any particular script use is intended to convey. When relevant, interviews with the manga authors are also used. Broad script-image level description of hiragana, katakana, and kanji are found to influence the contexts of each script's marked employment, but only in terms of providing a large list of potential stance

effects. The ultimate meaning produced by any selection is instead bound to the contexts of its employment and other co-occurring language items within any given interaction, with this complexity allowing for a single script to produce contradictory effects. Additionally, the analysis identifies variation between entire orthographic standards used as a way of separating the voices of specific social groups, showing that text- or dialogue-wide script norms can also serve as indexes of identity.

This chapter contains data that was discussed in my 2018 article “Scripted voices: script's role in creating Japanese manga dialogue”, published in *The Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics* (available online, awaiting print), and my forthcoming article “Old enough to speak in kanji: indexing childishness and development through competing script conventions in Japanese manga” in press with *Discourse, Context, & Media*. Again, I obtained permission to reuse the data, and engage in no self-plagiarism. This chapter also includes data that is not present in either article, and analyzes previously published data in a combined, holistic manner that raises points which they could not attend to.

Chapter 5: I'm a Kanji Boku – Interactions Between Indexical Fields

In Chapter 5, I begin by continuing discussion of *Usagi Doroppu* (Bunny Drop), one of the manga analyzed in Chapter 4. Specifically, I look at how the author of this manga uses different combinations of script and first-person pronouns to divide character identities and social performances. That is, rather than simply utilizing a script in a marked way, or selecting from one of the many Japanese pronouns (which have established function as indexes in their own right), the author uses combinations of the two to index social divides that can only be understood by attending to the simultaneous variation across both channels. The chapter then switches perspectives to examine the results of an online survey on script use, looking at qualitative and quantitative data regarding the identities native speakers associate with specific script/pronoun combinations, and the ways that they move between these combinations in their daily lives. Ultimately, I argue that the combined data shows the existence of a matrix-like system for identity representation. This allows writers to signal information through “horizontal” or “vertical” moves, i.e., along lexical or orthographic channels alone, as well as “diagonal” moves which employ variation from multiple channels.

This chapter contains data that was discussed in my 2017 article “He's more katakana than kanji: indexing identity and self-presentation through script selection in Japanese manga”, published in *The Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 21(4). I have obtained permission to reuse data from the article. I have not begun drafting this chapter, but I again intend to write it from the ground up to avoid any redundant analysis or self-plagiarism. The chapter will also differ heavily from the article in including the new (unpublished anywhere) survey data and references to data in other chapters of this book.

Chapter 6: Using Katakana Like an Old Man – The Influence of Script Variation Authorial Identity

In the final analysis chapter, I look at the results of an online survey designed to see if and how changes to the script use within a text affect interpretation of its author. For this chapter, I prepared a survey which draws upon three short, authentic Japanese texts taken from Japanese online forums. These texts were modified to create three new versions of each, with each new version respectively emphasizing one of the Japanese scripts. Beyond the orthographic changes, there were no differences between the four total versions. As such, while each text looks quite different, the original and its three modified copies are all identical if read aloud. Each participant was then shown one version of each text at random, and asked to give their impressions of the author's identity, with the unmodified version compared against the marked versions as a

control. Analysis reveals that script change alone can have a major impact on the interpretation of an author, with readers even specifically discussing orthographic aspects of the texts when explaining their conclusions. Importantly though, the effect created by increasing a specific script is not seen to be static (as in, hiragana always creates increased perceptions of youth), but rather varies in relation to co-occurring features of the text. Participants also explicitly associate entire habits of script use with distinct populations, with writing habits discussed in a manner similar to how we talk about socially relevant language practices found in speech.

Chapter 7: The Social Role of Script in Written Japanese

To close this monograph, I survey the various findings throughout the previous chapters, summarizing the contributions this text has made to our understanding of Japanese script variation. First, I will cover the various effects that each script's marked use was noted to create, and compare this against prior image-level descriptions. Secondly, I will review the various factors which were seen to impact what a selection of script or style of script use indexes, looking at the ways these interactions mimic those we see in discussions of spoken variation. Lastly, I discuss evidence that entire habits of script use can be treated as markers of certain identity or social practices, arguing that semi-codified script practices can form into visual registers that can only be identified or understood by attending to entire writing styles. Ultimately, the chapter concludes by arguing that instances of script variation in Japanese must be considered as potential social acts in a manner akin to how we discuss variation in speech, and lay out the implications this finding has for our study of language variation in other contexts.

Samples of Chapter 1-3 are provided as a PDF to this application.

4. Please indicate the approximate number of printed pages you envisage, (allowing 400 words per printed page) and state the number of line illustrations, photographs, and tables that would be included. State if (and why) colour would be required.

Currently I envision around 225-250 pages. This number is based on an estimation of the final manuscript being around 80,000-85,000 words, which is itself extrapolated from the 35,000 word count of the first three chapters. A text of 80,000-85,000 words would result in around 200-212.5 pages, with tables, images, and references then increasing the final page count slightly.

In terms of tables and illustrations, the three drafted chapters include 7 tables and 11 images. Future chapters will likely contain similar numbers of tables, and so a safe estimate for the final manuscript is between 15-20 tables. The number of images is unlikely to increase much further though, as the need for them is primarily in Chapters 1 and 3. I therefore predict about 15 images total.

Color printing is not required.

5. Please provide a soundbite (around 200 words) about your book, which could be used on the jacket of the book in order to draw the reader in.

Imagine this book was written in Comic Sans. Would this choice impact your image of me as an author, despite causing no literal change to the content within? Generally, discussions of how language variants influence interpretation of language acts/users have ignored variation inherent to the written mode, focusing instead on spoken production. But it is important to remember that we attend to differences between how both how people speak and represent language, with specific writing practices also associated with specific social actors. Nowhere is this fact more relevant than in written Japanese, where a complex history of script use has

created a situation where authors can represent any sentence element in three distinct scripts. This monograph provides the first investigation into the ways these authors and their readers engage with script variation as a social language practice, looking at how purely script-based language choices influence the ultimate meaning created by language acts. Ultimately, analysis of data across multiple studies shows Japanese script play standing as an important avenue for establishing identity and social positioning within or across texts, with specific marked styles producing meaning via complex processes that both rely on and perpetuate social ideologies about language users/language use.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS SUBMITTING PHDS

Chapters 1 and 2 utilize some elements of the introduction, literature review, and theoretical framework chapters of my PhD thesis. However, these new chapters were written from the ground up with this book in mind, rather than simply modified from their original form. Neither chapter is written in the style of a literature review or theoretical framework. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 then similarly utilize large amounts of data from analysis chapters of my PhD thesis, but again do not simply copy/paste the analysis from the thesis. They are also re-written from scratch, and contain new data, discussions, and arguments that reflect developments in my thinking since 2016. Everything from the second half of Chapter 5 is then entirely new, and based on studies that were conducted specifically for this project. As a result, I put forward that this text is better described as inspired by the thesis than written by directly adapting it into a book format.

READERSHIP

6. Who is the readership for this book, and what background do you expect them to have?

The readership for this book is fairly broad, and the introductory aspects of the first two chapters should ensure that it is accessible to any reader with a background in linguistics or language studies. Obviously, I expect the text to be of primary interest to scholars of Japanese. This is not simply limited to scholars interested in script play though, as I believe that the book is also of use to Japanese learners, translators, and linguists, as the themes have relevance to anyone who wishes to understand or engaging with casual avenues for Japanese language use or contemporary Japanese language ideologies. It also communicates with the current discussion of Kinsui's *yakumarigo* (role-language) in Japanese linguistics, and should be of interest to the readership of this sub-field. On the other hand, I also intend for this book to be written in a way that allows non-Japanese linguists to follow along, as a primary goal of this work is to bring heretofore Japan-centric discussion of Japanese script variation into more global dialogues about language variation as a universal practice. As such, I believe the readership includes a general (socio-)linguistic audience as well. Scholars interested in language history or language policy will also find certain chapters of use.

7. If you expect your book to be recommended on university or college courses please provide us with the following additional information:

To be honest, I do not know of specific writing-system focused courses where the book would serve as a primary text. The sociolinguistics of writing-based variation is simply too new of a topic to inspire entire courses. However, I am aware that prior articles I have written are being used in Japanese linguistics and/or sociolinguistics courses at the 300/400 level though, including at UCLA, University of Hawai'i, and Macalester College. Given that this book expands on my prior work, I imagine that chapters will be of similar relevance as recommended reading in higher level and postgraduate (Japanese) linguistic courses.

COMPETITION

11. Please attach a list of competing and related books, including author(s)/editor(s), publisher and year of publication.

As far as I know, there are no other books which examine this specific topic in a competing manner. Related books which greatly influenced this research include (in chronological order):

Nakamura, M. (2014). *Gender, Language, and Ideology: A Genealogy of Japanese Women's Language*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Kinsui, S. (2014). *Kore mo nihongo aru ka? Ijin no kotoba ga umareru toki [Is this Japanese Too? When "Others" Speech Was Born]*. Tokyo: Iwanami.

Konno, S. (2013). *Seishobō no nai nihongo [Japanese without Orthographic Rules]*. Tokyo: Iwanami.

Sebba, M., Jaffe, A., Androutsopoulos, J., & Johnson, S. (2012). *Orthography as Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Sebba, M. (2007). *Spelling and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

12. How will your book differ?

My book is simply the first to examine purely graphic play as an index of stance and identity, especially in relation to Japanese language data. While several texts in both English and Japanese have recognized Japan's script flexibility, and discussed it in passing, this is the first text to take it as the primary means of study. Prior graphic study of language variation in other languages also differs, as it has been primarily limited to discussions of signage or language policy rather than as an interactional resource. As a result, this book stands as the first major investigation into graphic variation as a way of establishing identity through language representation, or its use as an linguistic resource during asynchronous written communication.

YOUR BACKGROUND

13. Please attach a brief Curriculum Vitae to this questionnaire, listing previous publications if appropriate.

My CV is attached to my application as requested. My postal address, etc., are on my CV, but I will reproduce them here:

Address: [address]

Email Address: [email]

Phone: [phone]

TIMESCALE

14. Publication to an agreed deadline is fundamental to good publishing. When would you expect to be able to submit a complete manuscript?

I expect to be able to submit a complete manuscript by the end of 2019. As mentioned, the first three chapters are drafted and have gone through extensive self-editing. Data collection is also completely finished, with only minor analysis remaining. As I have a satisfactory number of publications under review for release in 2019, my research time next year can be spent entirely on this monograph. I also plan to apply for my [internal grant] for the second half of 2019, which will provide significant teaching relief so that I can concentrate more fully on the final chapters/editing.

OTHER INFORMATION

15. Can you suggest three people from whom we might solicit, in confidence, a review of this proposal. Please supply their names, addresses and email addresses if possible. Please do not suggest anyone who is likely to contribute to the proposed book, anyone who teaches at the same institution as yourself or, if your proposal is based upon your Ph.D. or other postgraduate dissertation, anyone involved in its supervision or assessment.

I would suggest any of the following as potential reviewers. None of them are involved with this monograph, or participated in the review of my PhD thesis:

[Suggestions for reviewers]

16. Please share any further information you feel would be useful in supporting this proposal.

Work on this book has received internal funding from my university, including a Faculty Research Travel Grant which was used to present and receive feedback on the data that will become Chapter 6. This will assist with the grant discussed in #14, as the applications are linked, and the desire to create a monograph was explicitly mentioned in the earlier application.

[Bragging about prior accomplishments here]