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Introduction to the *Language and Global Media* Special Issue

This Special Issue brings together papers from the Language and Global Media International Workshop (University of Melbourne, 2016) with a focus particularly on writing practices and text-on-screen in contemporary global media. The term global media invokes the "geographic permeation" (Johnson and Ensslin, 2007, p. 24) of communication and entertainment enabled and facilitated by both professionals and amateurs. For, in increasingly participatory (Jenkins, 1992, 2006) mediascapes (Appadurai, 1990, 1996), production and consumption are enmeshed in commercial and fan-based enterprises at both the global and local levels. The question of how global media discourses situate social, cultural and political groups in relation to domestic and international affairs is of central importance to understanding the changing socio-political environment of our interconnected regions.

Movement between and across languages is fundamental to global media flows. Twitter feeds, elaborate news tickers and information graphics have taken up residence on the bottom of our screens. In a multi-media, multitasking world, text and graphics are strategically manipulated to provide "extra" information or to "grab attention." Corporations are advised to embrace "muted" media by making use of captions and graphics in their audiovisual marketing to reach potential consumers.[1] Such captions are citational, citing the voice of narrators and those who appear to verbally interact on screen. The projection of captions in synch with the audio gives the illusion of simultaneousness that renders editing and production processes invisible, at the very point where the results of those processes appear visually on the screen. Moving and still images, live conversations, scripted announcements, narration, and/or pre-recorded conversation, are further augmented by background music, sound effects and/or carefully orchestrated silences which create complex semiotic layers that travel across complex mediascapes. In heavily text laden products, visual language must be transposed and translated.

On social media platforms, creative orthography, quirky abbreviations, glyphs and ideograms, memes and gifs circulate from individual to individual. Through intertextual chains of "sharing," users project stances of un/liking, dis/alignment, dis/agreement with content, form, and intent. Collaborative acts of writing such as the layering of captions onto audiovisual media, or the sharing of news items across social-media platforms are examples of work done by and through language. Such writing occurs according to participatory norms that are embedded in local interactions, which are in turn influenced by wider socio-political contexts. Written language is an integral part of the visual landscape.

Papers in this special issue examine a variety of media texts—Japanese *manga* (Redmond; Robertson), television variety shows (Wongseree, O'Hagan and Sasamoto), public service messages (Nguyen and Gruba) and microblogs (Parkwell)—and a range of practices including orthographic and textual stylization (Redmond; Robertson), digital communication using *emoji* (Parkwell), videotext using animation (Nguyen and Gruba), and fansubbing (Wongseree, O'Hagan and Sasamoto). Our focus is not only on media products that circulate transnationally, but also on formats common to local contexts that travel via commercial and/or alternative fan networks through platforms dispersed in diverse geospatial locations.

Writing, in its many forms, is a social practice that makes use of variants to create social meaning (Sebba, 2007). Orthography is anchored in social and cultural practices, and tied to literacy practices therein (Sebba, 2000, p. 929). Both Redmond and Robertson explore the meaning-making potential of script manipulation in Japanese language *manga*, a global media genre that circulates through both commercial and fan-based subcultures. Writing in Japanese conventionally requires usage of a combination of *kanji* (commonly referred to as Chinese characters) and two phonetic scripts: *hiragana* (cursive script), and *katakana* (boxed script). Whilst centralized writing conventions guide script choice in mainstream media texts, a wide range of creative and non-conventional usage can be noted in genres such as advertising, poetry and graphic novels, or *manga*.

Robertson examines how script manipulation in Japanese indexes context specific social meanings through an analysis of the use or non-use of *kanji* in three *manga* series, each written and illustrated by a single author. Although Japanese writers can articulate common sense notions of the "feel" or "image" of each script, there has been little analysis in the literature of the ideologies that inform decisions relating to script choice, and the associated indexical field (Eckert, 2008). The acquisition of *kanji* conventionally occurs as young speakers move from primary to secondary education, and then on to tertiary education. An absence of *kanji*, or the use of *hiragana* for what would be conventionally written in *kanji*, is, therefore, often linked to age, and seen to index "child-like-ness." Robertson's analysis demonstrates that within the contexts of individual *manga*, *kanji* use is negotiated vis-à-vis the author's ideological framing of "language users and use." Consequently, while a comparative lack of *kanji* use in the dialogue of a character may align with the character's biological age, *kanji* usage that is deemed to be beyond the capabilities of that age may also

[1] Increasingly, closed captions for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing users fight with impact captions edited onto commercial audiovisual media in regions where embellishment of the screen is commonplace.

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be employed to produce incongruous, comic or pretentious voices. This analysis illustrates the limitations of assigning static interpretations onto each script. It demonstrates the importance of analytical approaches that examine the meaning-making achieved through script choice within local contexts.

Redmond's paper examines script usage in *manga,* focusing on a little researched aspect of Japanese writing: the interlinear gloss (Wilkerson and Wilkerson, 2000) known as *furigana. Furigana* is conventionally written in the *hiragana* script to the right of vertical text, or above horizontal text. It is used to give readings for unusual and/or difficult (comparative to the assumed literacy level of the readership) character combinations (Miller, 1994; Tranter, 2008; Wilkerson and Wilkerson, 2000). *Furigana* is also used for emphatic stylization. Redmond's analysis of Spanish-derived and German-derived *furigana* readings demonstrates how stereotypes are injected (Haarman, 1989) onto characters in a process of "othering" that shapes the *manga*'s construction of "Japaneseness." Characterological types emerge, therefore, without the need for overt characterization.

The emergence of platforms that facilitate participation across temporal and spatial distances has propelled forward diverse participatory cultures (Jenkins, 2006; Lee, 2011) through which semiotic resources are transported. *Emoji* are indicative of semiotic resources transported from their field of origin—the Japanese language mobile network carriers of the 1990s—to circulate on multiple platforms and in varying configurations. Celebrity and personal styling come to the forefront in Parkwell's analysis of the toilet *emoji* in microblogging by Cher, a personality with global reach. Parkwell situates *emoji* as a "new communication modality," and, closely following Zappavigna's (2011, 2015, 2018) analysis of hashtags, identifies their experiential, interpersonal and textual functions. Through a social semiotic analysis of the most commonly used *emoji* in her corpus—the toilet *emoji*—Parkwell demonstrates that commenting on national politics at the individual level is facilitated through the use of a semiosis that transmutes in different linguistic contexts. *Emoji* play a role in affiliation building online and in enabling connections between users; in this instance, celebrities and their fans.

The language practices of global media markets are spaces where fans not only consume media products but produce cultural artifacts. Participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Lee, 2011) is punctuated by ludic practices (Schules, 2012) such as imitative practices of cosplaying and slash-fiction, and collaborative work in fan-translation and fansubbing (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez, 2006; Dwyer, 2012a, 2012b; Lee, 2011; O'Hagan, 2009). The blending and transmutation of macro and micro, global, regional and local is pursued by Wongseree, O'Hagan and Sasamoto in their analysis of fansubbing practices within Thai fan communities of Korean variety television. Here we are urged to follow the networks and flows and "trudge like an ant" (Latour, 2005, p. 25) into the user-generated content which manifests an "alternative global media circulation," to explore notions of reproduction and recontextualization through the interactions of human and non-human actors. Wongseree, O'Hagan and Sasamoto identify that trust and a sense of shared ethical commitment propels fan-generated subtitling practices wherein processes of cultural interpretation and linguistic translation facilitate the inscription of subtitles and other textual information onto the screen. The wider fan community sustains collaborative practices that lie outside of legal frameworks of translation through discourses of trust that valorize the work of the fans over other forms of subtitling production.

Nguyen and Gruba turn our attention to legal frameworks and systems of governmentality in their analysis of the Australian government's Operation Sovereign Borders' "No way" campaign videotext. The "No way" videotext makes use of animation to depict a key protagonist: an asylum seeker who experiences "hardship in the homeland" that prompts risky behavior and an attempt to travel and enter Australia via the sea. Through the use of muted tones and sparse spoken and written language, risk is posited as the responsibility of the individual who willingly engages with "people smugglers" and embarks on a "harsh journey by boat." At the point that the boat is intercepted by the Australian Border Force in the latter half of the video, a technico-scientific discourse places the Australian government as powerful in its control of risks that extends beyond its borders to all potential citizens. Employing a Systemic Functional-Multimodal Discourse Analysis approach (O'Halloran, 2008, 2011) allows Nguyen and Gruba to highlight how the layering of semiotic meanings constructs risk as the responsibility of potential citizens, therefore presenting a message that seeks to "discourage" such risk-taking by asylum seekers.

Ideologies and cultural values are simultaneously transported with media as it traverses transnational borders. The tastes and/or opinions animated through media representations are linked to specific geospatial points of historical reference (Hiramoto and Kang, 2017). Cultural genres originate in specific geospatial locations and within a particular nexus of power and discrimination. Global media flows are not mere appropriation or examples of cultural imperialism but are, as has been said of rap music, "global post-industrial signifying practices" (Pennycook, 2003, p. 513) where the indexical use of language, including scripts, *emoji* and text-on-screen, points simultaneously to the global and the intimately local. As citational practices, such media not only reconstitutes prior discourse but simultaneously "anticipates future discourse" (Goodman et al., 2014, p. 450), aligning with temporal discourses that orient us to newly emerging possibilities. The inherent multimodality of media texts necessitates unpacking the layerings of semiotic meaning that are reconstituted through and via technological practices which emerge from different origins to be recontextualized at each new point.

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