

An On-Line Japanese Handwriting Recognition System integrated
into an E-Learning Environment for Kanji

Diplomarbeit

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Contents

1	Conclusions	3
1.1	Recapitulation	3
1.2	Discussion	3

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig angefertigt und keine fremde Hilfe in Anspruch genommen habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich aus veröffentlichten oder nicht veröffentlichten Schriften entnommen sind, habe ich als solche einzeln kenntlich gemacht. Ferner erkläre ich, dass die vorliegende Arbeit in keinem anderen Studiengang und an keiner anderen Stelle als Prüfungsleistung verwendet wurde.

Saarbrücken, den 07.06.2010

Steven Poggel

Chapter 1

Conclusions

1.1 Recapitulation

The goal of this work was the development of an *analytical* handwriting recognition engine for Kanji. A subordinated aim was to study the new possibilities such a system component offers. This has been exemplified for a sample e-learning application that includes exercises for handwritten input. The analytical handwriting recognition provides the e-learning application with the ability to give the learner feedback about an entered character.

This thesis contains a number of topics that do not share a common academic background. The prerequisites for building an analytical handwriting recognition and integrate it into an e-learning environment form a common ground for the topics. The thesis starts with the basics of Japanese handwriting. The Japanese writing system with its three scripts is fairly different from alphabetic writing systems. The structure of the Japanese character system has been introduced in chapter ???. Chapter ??? contains a literature review of the topic *handwriting recognition systems*. The general techniques and models for handwriting recognition are presented as well as the special techniques for online character recognition and the specifics of Japanese and Chinese character recognition. Seemingly unrelated to the previous chapters, but required for building an e-learning application, chapter ??? presents the general methods and techniques for implementing e-learning applications, especially for e-learning of languages. This first part of the thesis builds the foundation of the following chapters.

The next two chapters are concerned with the design of the prototype that has been developed during the course of the thesis. The findings of these chapters are directly geared to the goals of the thesis. Chapter ??? takes an abstract viewpoint and incorporate the conceptual insight of the foundational chapters for the high-level design of the application. The knowledge about the Japanese character structure and the educational methodology of e-learning are used for the conceptual design. Chapter ??? presents the technical design choices that implement the concepts developed in the precedent chapter.

The core of the recognition engine is layed out in chapter ????. This chapter contains topics that are part of the technical design. However, the viewpoint in this chapter is more detailed and magnifies a specific part of the application. The core recognition engine uses a combination of different pattern matching techniques in order to perform an analytical character recognition, including error recognition.

The evaluation of the analytical handwriting recognition has been presented in chapter ???. The recognition rates were below the rates of non-analytical systems, but the systems provides additional analytical information that can be used in different contexts.

1.2 Discussion

In this work an analytical handwriting recognition engine has been developed. The motivation behind that was not just to develop another recognition system for Japanese characters, but to create a system that is oriented towards weak artificial intelligence and analysis the structures to a certain degree of *understanding*. Another motivational aspect was to look into a different type of user interface for e-learning applications.

A direct comparison to other efforts in the field of Japanese handwriting recognition is not entirely possible because of the additional analytical steps performed by the prototype. The sheer recognition rates are lower than the recognition rates of systems that perform a pure and optimised handwriting recognition. That seems due to the fact that the detailed analysis increases the recognition options. Partial character recognition of substructures of Japanese characters has similar recognition results compared to state-of-the-art recognition systems.

The attempt to integrate NLP and e-learning was successful. The central part of the e-learning system relies on the analytical handwriting recognition. When a user enters a character, the character is split into sub

units, the generated feedback about the input correctness can guide a user precisely to the error. This feature is advantageous compared to the binary statement *correct* or *incorrect* that other recognition systems provide. The success of the learning component could not be evaluated because that would have been outside the scope of the thesis. However, it is plausible that writing Kanji and receiving feedback is an appropriate method to learn writing Kanji. A direct comparison to other e-learning systems was not possible as this is the only e-learning system known to the author that provides feedback to handwritten input.

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