Japanese HWR

Steven B. Poggel
steven.poggel@gmail.com

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Chapter 1

Japanese Script

The Japanese writing system has a long history. It goes back to around 800 A.D. The Japanese script is in fact a writing system, as Japanese is denoted in a combination of three different scripts: *Hiragana*, *Katakana* and *Kanji*. Kanji is a conceptual script, where each character bears the meaning of one or more semantic concepts and represents morphemes. Hiragana and Katakana are both syllabic scripts, and the individual characters do not bear reference to concepts or even words, but merely to phonological units, usually two phonemes.

In this chapter, the development of the script will be reviewed in section 1.1. In section 1.2 the current Japanese writing system will be exemplified, with a focus on the Kanji in section 1.2.2. Hiragana and Katakana will be reviewed in section 1.2.1, which centers around the Kana scripts. Machine processing of the different Japanese scripts and the difficulties that go along will be demonstrated in sectinon 1.2.5. The difficulties of learning to use the Japanese script will be illustrated in section 1.3.

1.1 A Short History of the Japanese Script

The historical development of the Japanese script is tightly connected to the history of the Kanji characters. Kanji, in Japanese 漢字 (jap. pronunciation /kanji; eng. lit. *Han characters*) refers to the 'characters of the Han', meaning the Han Dynasty (simplified Chinese: 汉朝; traditional Chinese: 漢朝). Notice, that the first character 漢 (Chin. han, jap. kan) is identical in Japanese and traditional Chinese, even though it has a different pronunciation in the Chinese and Japanese language. This apparent oddity will be explained in greater detail in section 1.1.1.

1.1.1 Historical Development

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 2.1.1-2.1.3 xxx: see wikipedia article xxx: see (Grassmuck 1997) xxx: see (Chamberlain 1982) for the Kojiki

1.2 The Modern Japanese Writing System

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 3.1 xxx: see (Lange 1922) p.64 xxx: see (Tsujimura 2007) for morphology stuff xxx: see (Grassmuck 1997)

xxx: aufbau des schriftsystems generell xxx: Gemischtschreibung xxx: Kurze erwaehnung der morphologie. Hiragana an verben zur konjugation. zusammenhang verben / nomen in kanji, xxx: uppercase / lowercase nicht vorhanden. etc. xxx: see `http://japanese.about.com/library/weekly/aa070101a.htm` xxx: see `http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/cgi-bin/wwwjdic.cgi?1R`

1.2.1 Kana かな

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 2.2 xxx: see (Lange 1922) p.57ff

1.2.1.1 Hiragana ひらがな

1.2.1.2 Katakana カタカナ

1.2.2 Composition of the Kanji 漢字

xxx: see (Lange 1922) p.64

1.2.2.1 Graphemic Elements

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 2.1.4.2

1.2.2.2 Radicals

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 2.1.5 xxx: see (Lange 1922) p.85ff p.94ff

1.2.2.3 Readings

1.2.3 Structure of the Japanese Writing System

Having demonstrated the Hiragana in 1.2.1.1, the Katakana in 1.2.1.2 and the Kanji in section 1.2.2, it is now possible to report about the structure of the writing system as such.

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 3.1-3.2

1.2.4 Romaji ロマジ

xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 4

1.2.5 Machine Writing of Japanese

Machine processing of the Japanese scripts has been an issue, ever since humans started to automate their writing.

xxx: see (Lange 1922) p. XII Stichwort Drucklegung xxx: see (Foljanty 1984) 5 xxx: see MS IME description (technical report or something?!) xxx: see section **??** for a description of research efforts in order to provide technology for using handwriting as an input method for Japanese. xxx: see (Grassmuck 1997)

1.3 Difficulties of Writing Japanese for Learners

xxx: find places for citations of the following paper (if not already done) (Foljanty 1984) (Lange 1922) (Katsuki-Pestemer 2006a) (Katsuki-Pestemer 2006b) (Haschke and Thomas 2008) (Tsujimura 2007) (Grassmuck 1997)

List of Figures

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