

Grapholinguistics – an expanding research field
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Grammatology, graphonomy, graphemics, writing systems research – there are many names for a discipline that became established in linguistics only towards the second half of the last century. However, they are by no means synonyms; indeed, the mentioned terms stem from different paradigms and research traditions and do not cover precisely the same areas. What they have in common is that they all address different facets of the topic of writing. These aspects are subsumed under the heading of *grapholinguistics* – a designation that is already well-established in German-language research (as ‘Schriftlinguistik’) and is now gaining ground in the English-speaking world as well. Grapholinguistics is defined as an interdisciplinary field of research that covers not only structural questions concerning writing but adopts also sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and several other perspectives as well as methodologies in order to do this complex and multifaceted phenomenon justice (cf. Meletis/Dürscheid 2022).

One of the aims of grapholinguistic research is the establishment of a framework for the systematic investigation of writing systems, including analytical subbranches and descriptive concepts. Notably, such a framework must be capable of accounting for all writing systems – and not just alphabets. Against this background, a trichotomy of areas has recently gained traction in an increasingly international and comparative grapholinguistics: (1) *graphetics*, studying all aspects concerning the materiality of writing; (2) *graphematics*, examining the linguistic and communicative functions of writing, and (3) *orthography*, dealing with the normative aspects of writing such as the regulation of written structures. With a combination of concepts and perspectives from these three subbranches, a thorough description of various writing systems can be achieved, allowing a comparison and typologization that moves beyond the mere question of which linguistic levels their basic units mainly correspond with (cf. Joyce/Meletis 2021). In complementing these fine-grained analyses with usage-based perspectives, scholars from diverse disciplines can gain a fuller picture of writing as a structural and communicative phenomenon.

In our talk, we will first trace the German grapholinguistic tradition and outline what distinguishes it from the work that has emerged in the Anglo-American world in the past two decades. Then we will address current developments and show exemplarily which areas have only recently been added to this broad field (e.g., research on handwriting, cf. Gredig 2021). The second part of the talk will illustrate how the systematic distinction between graphetics, graphematics, and orthography can be used in the description, classification, and comparison of diverse writing systems.

Gredig, Andi (2021). *Schreiben mit der Hand: Begriffe – Diskurs – Praktiken*. Berlin: Frank & Timme. <https://doi.org/10.26530/20.500.12657/46049>

Joyce, Terry, and Dimitrios Meletis (2021). Alternative criteria for writing system typology. Cross-linguistic observations from the German and Japanese writing systems. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 40.3: 257–77. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfs-2021-2030>

Meletis, Dimitrios, and Christa Dürscheid (2022). *Writing systems and their use. An overview of grapholinguistics* (Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs 369). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110757835>