

Producing a semi-diplomatic transcription (校訂文)

Semi-diplomatic transcriptions (校訂文), with or without annotations, are the next step in making early modern materials accessible to the 21st-century reader.

While diplomatic transcriptions (翻刻) aim to be as faithful as possible to the original (the only difference being the use of contemporary Japanese script), semi-diplomatic transcriptions aim to intervene on the text to enhance accessibility and readability for us, 21st-century readers.

This means that the scholar in charge of producing a semi-diplomatic transcription exerts a lot of judgment and personal choices in the making of a semi-diplomatic transcription.

Commonly accepted rules

1. Convert *hiragana* into *kanji* and include the original *hiragana* as *furigana*.

This makes sense and is straightforward for texts that contain few *kanji* and no or little *furigana* (for instance *kusazōshi*, *hanashibon*, *sharebon*, *kokeibon*, etc.). In order to choose the correct *kanji* you must make sense of the meaning. In choosing the suitable *kanji*, do make sure to use all the resources at your disposal, including a wealth of Japanese dictionaries.

If the original text already contains many *kanji* with or without *furigana* (e.g., *yomibon*, etc.), the conversion of *hiragana* into *kanji* makes little sense. So, you may decide to forgo this step.

What words to convert into *kanji*? All of the words in *hiragana* or a selection? If a selection, how do I choose? There is no hard rule on this. It is down to your own use of *kanji* and what you think would be useful for your target reader. The same applies when you can choose between multiple *kanji* for the same word (e.g., 噺 vs. 咄): it is up to you and the research you have done on the *kanji* options.

2. Add punctuation

Early modern texts normally contain no punctuation or if they do, the punctuation is made of 「。」 or 「。」 that work differently from our understanding of punctuation. In the semi-diplomatic transcriptions, punctuation, as we know of it today, must be included. If the text contained punctuation, this is to be removed and changed into contemporary punctuation.

To what extent? Once again, this is down to your own use of punctuation and what you think would be useful for your target reader.

3. Add other diacritics

The speech marks (「」) and other diacritics (e.g., 『』 for titles, etc.) need to be added. If the original contained ~\ for speech lines, these are to be converted into 「」.

4. Add paragraphs

Ensure that paragraphs are added, as they would normally work in a contemporary text.

5. Dakuten

This is a much-debated point. Some scholars encourage the addition of *dakuten* and *bandakuten* given that they did exist in early modern times. If you add *dakuten* this should be done consistently, including in the *hiragana*-turned-*furigana*. Other scholars decide not to add *dakuten*.

6. Use of small-size つ・ッ and small-size や・ゆ・よ

Agreement exists around *not* using them. So もつて／以て (which would be もって／以て) should retain the big size つ. The same applies for きやうげん／^{きやうげん}狂言, not to be changed into きやうげん／^{きやうげん}狂言 or きょうげん／^{きょうげん}狂言.

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