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Orthography profiles for dealing with written data

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For the historical comparison of languages across the world there are many written resources available (dictionaries, texts, grammars). To be able to use such resources we have to interpret the orthographic representation that is used. We will present our current work on formulating "orthography profiles", which are computer readable descriptions of an orthographic representation as used in a particular source.

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On the geographic distribution of phoneme inventories: a reply to Atkinson.

Michael Cysouw, Dan Dediu, Steve Moran

Quentin Atkinson recently reported in Science that he can find an 'out-of-Africa' cline in the geographic distribution of phoneme inventories across the world's languages. This finding is rather unexpected from linguistic intuition, but the methodology used is not obviously wrong (otherwise it would probably not have been accepted in Science). We will present an in-depth rebuttal of the paper.

(Atkinson, Q. 2011. Phonemic Diversity Supports a Serial Founder Effect Model of Language Expansion from Africa, Science 15 April 2011: Vol. 332 no. 6027 pp. 346-349, DOI: 10.1126/science.1199295)