

# Contents

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	page viii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxi
<b>PART I WRITING AND THE ALPHABET</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 The historical development of writing</b>	<b>3</b>
Writing and design	3
Proto-writing	8
Early writing systems	18
Logographic writing	29
The development of phonetic transcription	37
The alphabet	40
The unity and diversity of alphabets	49
The implications of graphic systems	53
<b>PART II THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY FORMS OF WRITING</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2 Literacy and achievement in the Ancient World</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>3 Africa, Greece and oral poetry</b>	<b>78</b>
Memory and verbatim memory	86
Oral composition and oral transmission	91
Heroic societies and the epic	96
<b>4 Oral composition and oral transmission: the case of the Vedas</b>	<b>110</b>

<b>PART III WRITTEN AND ORAL CULTURES IN WEST AFRICA</b>	123
<b>5 The impact of Islamic writing on oral cultures</b>	125
Oral recitations	127
Writing and magico-religious activity	129
Time and space	132
<b>6 Literacy and the non-literate: the impact of European schooling</b>	139
Postscript	147
<b>7 Alternative paths to knowledge in oral and literate cultures</b>	148
Traditional knowledge among the LoDagaa	149
The growth of knowledge	155
Three modes of acquiring knowledge	156
Literacy	157
Two paths to knowledge as social control	161
Conclusions	164
<b>8 Memory and learning in oral and literate cultures: the reproduction of the Bagre</b>	167
Memory and the Bagre	167
Verbatim memory in oral cultures	174
Schools and memory	182
Conclusion	189
<b>9 Writing and formal operations: a case study among the Vai (with Michale Cole and Sylvia Scribner)</b>	191
The writings of Ansumana Sonie	196
<b>PART IV WRITING AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETY</b>	209
<b>10 The interface between the sociological and psychological analysis of literacy</b>	211
Achievement in the Vai script	211
Vygotsky and the psychological analysis of Vai literacy	214

Varieties of script and varieties of tradition	217
Logic and logical reasoning	219
Mediated and unmediated implications	221
Literacy effects in the Vai study	223
The shift from abilities to skills	226
Memory and writing	234
Schools	236
The experimental method	244
Culture and cognition	245
Abilities, capacities and skills	246
Cultural resources and individual attainment	251
Psychological texts and practical action	252
The internal–external problem	253
<b>11 Language and writing</b>	<b>258</b>
Linguists and the written language	261
Three dimensions of the written and the spoken	262
The written and spoken registers compared	263
Grammar and rules	265
Individual performance in the two registers	266
Divergences between the written and oral registers	270
Cross-word puzzles	272
Other grapho-linguistic techniques of cognitive operation	274
Lists and categories	275
The empty-box	275
Reordering information	276
Arithmetical operations	277
The syllogism	278
Writing and diglossia	279
Class and register	283
<b>12 Recapitulations</b>	<b>290</b>
<i>Notes</i>	301
<i>Bibliography</i>	306
<i>Index</i>	321