Lecture notes for *Writing Systems* Module (HUM130 WEEK 12 HUM210 WEEK 15):

Technology, Globalization, and the Evolution of Writing Systems: Case Study China

Well over a billion people speak Chinese and read Chinese characters (largest speech community in the world) – Forty million (15% of world pop.) are learning Chinese as a 2\textsuperscript{nd} language.

English is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} most spoken language in the world. There are 67 countries (1/2 billion people) where English is the official language – another 1 ½ billion ESL & EFL speakers.

Writing forms:

- **Chinese characters** (ideographic and phonetic) are created by and reflect the culture, mind, and social reality of the community.
  - Oldest known written language (approx. 6k yrs. old)
  - The writing form greatly impacts the culture and mind of their users.
  - Writing system has gone through several changes/modifications since its original construction.
  - Systems change to meet the needs of the political agendas for the public.
    1. **Oracle Bone**: Earliest writing using pictographic symbols (approx. 1500 – 1000 B.C.E. Shang Dynasty)
       - Etched onto turtle shells or animals bones to serve as historical documents for government use only
    2. **Greater Seal**: More words/characters are added and script is cast on bronze vessels (1100 – 700 B.C.E.)
    3. **Lesser Seal**: Pictographs become ideograms and a more flowing script evolves
       - Written on bamboo scrolls (literacy is no longer reserved for the government - citizens are encouraged to read)
       - Most similar to modern style of writing
    4. **Clerkly Script**: Modern Chinese writing system using set of symbols that are quicker to write
       - Government seeks 100% literacy rate
       - Easier to use with brushes and paper, and pens

- **Sin Wenz** writing system created to meet globalizing demands (Phonetic writing of Chinese words using Modern English alphabet)
  - The Chinese phonetic writing system has gone through several changes/modifications since its original construction.
  - First used by monks in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century – Official version proposed in late 19\textsuperscript{th} century during Qing dynasty
  - *Wade-Giles* phonetic system introduced in 1892 and used until 1979 – **Pinyin** system replaces the Wade-Giles
  - The advent of typewriters and then computers made Romanization of spoken Chinese a necessity.
**Vocabulary worksheet for Writing Systems Evolution module:**

Lingua Franca:

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Semantics:

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Transliteration:

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Phonetic Script:

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Pinyin:

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Diacritic Markings:

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Logograms:

_________________________________________________________________________

Diagraphic:

_________________________________________________________________________

Synchronic Diagraphia:

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Diachronic Diagraphica:

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