

Lecture notes for *Writing Systems* Module (HUM130WEEK 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 2nd language.

English is the 3rd 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 - Etched onto turtle shells or animals bones to serve as historical documents for government use only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 18th century – Official version proposed in late 19th 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:

Semantics:

Transliteration:

Phonetic Script:

Pinyin:

Diacritic Markings:

Logograms:

Diagraphic:

Synchronic Diagraphia:

Diachronic Diagraphica:
