



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Yirong Cui (崔苡榮)</i>	
<i>Module Code: SICH4005</i>	<i>Student number: 2016053</i>
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English Oral Presentation

Good afternoon professor, good morning everyone. I'm Yirong.
Today my presentation topic is comparing Chinese characters and *pinyin* characters.

I will divided it into the following parts: the preface, the commonality between Chinese characters and *pinyin* words, the difference between Chinese characters and *pinyin* characters, whether it is possible to turn Chinese characters into pinyin characters, and the conclusion.

Now, let's begin with the preface.

China is an old country with a long history and rich cultures. Through thousands of years of development, Chinese characters were produced. As a tool to write, preserve and spread knowledge, it makes great progress for China and the world.

Commonality between Chinese characters and *pinyin* characters

Firstly, they all originated from *xiangxing*. Characters in the world were mainly divided into two systems, one is *xingsheng* and another

is *pinyin*. We noticed that foreigners always start with *xiangxing* when they learn Chinese. For example, how to write the characters sun, moon, cloud, and rain. They usually think that the Chinese language is a kind of *xiangxing*. But they are wrong. The written Chinese language is not *xiangxing*, it is *xingsheng*. So, the correct understanding is that Chinese originated from *xiangxing*, just like some Western writing systems also originated from *xiangxing*.

Secondly, they are adopting to the changes of times and is continuing to moving forward. Because of misunderstanding that Chinese is *xiangxing*, westerners have this assumption that Chinese is conservative and behind as a language. Western languages got rid of *xiangxing* very early and became *pinyin*, so they think Chinese is a writing system that has not progressed and developed for thousands of years when they see that the Chinese people are still using this *xiangxing* characters. They think so because of how their own language has developed. They think that the evolution of writing systems must be from *xiangxing* to alphabetic and they think it's the only way for writing systems to evolve. But in fact, Chinese characters have developed in a different way. It's not behind, nor conservative. When western languages moved to *pinyin*, Chinese gradually went to *xingsheng*. So they are developing together.

The difference between Chinese characters and *pinyin* characters.

There are mainly seven parts.

Part one: Chinese characters can be used to create many combinations. Chinese characters use simple characters to form words, replacing complex structures. When new words continue to appear as society changes, Chinese usually produce new meanings by combining old symbols. For example, “電腦” and “原子”, The individual characters used here existed 2,000 years ago, so people are familiar with them. Now we put 電 and 腦 together, 原 and 子 together to get new meanings. But in the process, it didn't add the burden of creating new characters. English is different, new words need to be created to express meanings when new concepts and things appear. For example, when we read Times or Newsweek, we will find new words constantly being created. Even the dictionaries are too slow to accommodate the speed of these new words appearing. From this we can also see the difference between Chinese and *pinyin*.

Part two, Chinese characters are not limited by space and time. *xingsheng* characters has a great degree of independence from the

spoken language and is not limited by time. No matter how spoken language changes, the script can remain unchanging. So today we can still easily read “*Shiji*” and “*Lunyu*” (The Analects of Confucius) from two thousand years ago. And when we read these books we won’t find it too difficult. This is because Chinese characters have characteristics that transcend time and space.

Part three, as far as spatial factors are concerned, Chinese characters are also not limited by geography. There are many dialects in China, and the accents are different in different places, but they can communicate with the same writing system. The same character can be pronounced differently in Shandong dialect by Shandong people and in Hunan by Hunan people. The pronunciation is different but the written character is the same. If one day, Chinese characters are spread all over the world, English, German and French people can also read and use Chinese characters. This is because Chinese characters can be directly related to concepts without having to use spoken "language" as a medium. Therefore, Chinese characters cannot be limited by language and space.

Part four, Compared with Pinyin characters, Chinese characters also have the characteristics of graphic recognition. Chinese characters

have many strokes. From the standpoint of recognizability, the more complex the strokes, the easier it is to recognize. Letters and words that only show the pronunciation but no meaning are difficult for children to remember. The key is that Chinese characters have graphic effects. From a visual perspective, they are just like pictures, and it is easier for the right brain to receive feelings, which is not available in alphabetic writing systems.

Part five, Chinese characters are flat characters with a large amount of information. European and American languages use phonemic symbols to form words, which is a linear script. For Chinese characters, one character contains all elements of structure, sound, and meaning, and becomes a message plane, and it often holds more meaning than that of linear alphabetic scripts. Therefore, for articles with the same content, the English version always needs more space, and the Chinese version is always the shortest and most concise. Of the six languages in which the files and documents are printed by the United Nations, the Chinese version is always the thinnest, and the lesser number of characters does not reduce its accuracy in the slightest.

Part six, Chinese characters can represent information through the

pronunciation and the shape. However, alphabetic writing does not hold meaning in itself, it must be converted into meaning through spoken language, unlike Chinese characters, from which one can obtain information through the structure of the character alone. For example, if we do not know a certain word, we can infer its meaning from the radicals in the character. Characters that have the "wood" radical must be related to plants; characters with the water radical must be related to liquid. We all know that there are many homophones in Chinese characters. If we use pinyin, then many words are not clear, for example, 「王宮」 and 「王公」 which mean “palace” and “royalty”, 「期中考」 and 「期終考」 which mean “mid-term exam” and “final exam”, 「王國」 and 「亡國」 “kingdom” and “the collapse of a country”, So if we use Pinyin instead, it will cause a lot of confusion.

Is it possible to turn Chinese characters into *pinyin*?

From historical experience, in the process of Chinese character development, there were two opportunities for written Chinese to become pinyin. However, in the competition between pinyin and Chinese characters, the pinyin method was still eliminated. This is the result of objective verification. For the first time in the Six Dynasties, the "Thirty-six Alphabets" were used as *pinyin* in Chinese characters. At that time, the Chinese accepted Indian religion, art, literature, sculpture, and

painting. Why didn't they accept the *pinyin* characters? This is not the result of subjective rejection. On the contrary, the Chinese have humbly studied it and even created thirty-six alphabets according to it. However, long-term experiments have proved the superiority of *xingsheng* characters. The second time Chinese characters faced the challenge of pinyin characters was the "*Basaba* character" in the Yuan Dynasty. At present, a large number of official documents and various materials written in the script are still preserved. The Yuan Dynasty didn't last long, but if the *pinyin* character had its advantages and could be suitable for Chinese, and after the great promotion by the Yuan court, it had sufficient opportunities to replace Chinese characters, but it did not. *Pinyin* again failed in the competition with *xingsheng* characters.

In conclusion, whether in theory or in practice, Chinese characters are a highly developed and mature language, and it is the essence of the wisdom of Chinese people. Historically, Chinese characters have always played a huge role in promoting the cultural unity of the nation. Learning from the past, we are convinced that Chinese characters will continue to prosper in the future and not be replaced by *pinyin* writing.

That concludes my presentation. Any feedback and suggestions will be

appreciated. Thank you for listening patiently!

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