

Handout I.4

Outline for Unit I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION Lecture 2: CLASSIFICATION OF SCRIPTS AND WRITING SYSTEMS

I. The nature and definition of writing (revisited)

- A. Broad and narrow definitions of “writing”
- B. Relationship of writing (narrowly defined) to speech

II. Units of speech and units of writing

- A. Basic units of speech
 - 1. meaningless sound units (phonemes, syllables)
 - 2. meaningful units (morphemes, words)
- B. Basic units of writing (graphs)
- C. Script vs. writing system

III. Types of writing systems (see also Handout I.5)

- A. Based on the relationship between *graphs* and *speech units*
- B. Three traditional types: alphabetic, syllabic, logographic
- C. Phonographic vs. logographic
- D. Other script types
 - 1. consonantary (*abjad*)
 - 2. vocally-modified consonantary (*abugida*)
- E. Mixed writing systems (e.g. logo-syllabic)
 - 1. in function (one script)
 - 2. in form and function (mixed-script)

IV. Complications (see also Handout I.6)

- A. Writing approximates, but does not precisely reproduce language
- B. Factors which complicate relationship between spoken language and written representation
 - 1. Principle of economy in writing
 - 2. Dialect variation and standardization
 - 3. Historical change in language and in writing occur at different rates
 - 4. Historical influences: social, political, religious
 - 5. Written language is not spontaneous
- C. The connection between written language and spoken language can become attenuated