

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.69/L.106
22 August 1977

Original. CHINESE/ENGLISH



THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Athens, Greece

17 August - 7 September 1977

Item 15 of the provisional agenda

SCHEME FOR A CHINESE PHONETIC ALPHABET

Paper presented by the
People's Republic of China

SCHEME FOR A CHINESE PHONETIC ALPHABET

1. THE ALPHABET

Letters	Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Wade System	a pe ts'e te ê ef ke ha i chieh
Letters	Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Wade System	k'e el em ne o p'e ch'iu ar es t'e
Letters	Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
Wade System	u ve wa hsi ya tse

V is used only to produce foreign and national minority words, and local dialects. The written form of the letters follows the customary written form of Latin letters.

2. CONSONANTS

Consonants	Illustrative Chinese Characters	Wade System	Approximate English Equivalents
b	玻	p	b as in "be"
p	坡	p'	p as in "par," strongly aspirated

3. VOWELS

Vowels	Illustrative Chinese Characters	Wade System	Approximate English Equivalents
a	啊	a	a as in "father"
o	喔	o	aw as in "law"
e	鹅	ê	er as in "her," the r being silent
i	衣	i	ea as in "eat"
u	烏	u	oo as in "too"
ü	迂	ü	as German "ü"

Each vowel may be followed by other vowels or consonants to form the following diphthongs or finals:

Diphthongs

Diphthongs	Illustrative Chinese Characters	Wade System	Approximate English Equivalents
ia	呀	ia	yah
ua	娃	ua	wah
uo	窩	uo	wa as in "water"
ie	耶	ieh	ye as in "yes"
üe	約	yüeh	no English equivalent
ai	愛	ai	as pronoun "I"
uai	歪	uai	wi as in "wife"
ei	欸	ei	ay as in "way"
uei	威	ui, wei	as "way"
ao	熬	ao	ow as in "how"
iao	腰	iao	yow as in "yowl"
ou	歐	ou	ow as in "low"
iou	憂	iu	yee oo

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Consonants	Illustrative Chinese Characters	Wade System	Approximate English Equivalents
m	摸	m	m as in "man"
f	佛	f	f as in "food"
d	得	t	d as in "do"
t	特	t'	t as in "ten," strongly aspirated
n	訥	n	n as in "nine"
l	約	l	l as in "land"
g	哥	k	g as in "go"
k	科	k'	k as in "kind," strongly aspirated
h	喝	h	h as in "her," strongly gutturalized
j	基	ch (i)	j as in "jeep"
q	欺	ch' (i)	ch as in "cheek"
x	希	hs (i)	sh as in "she"
zh	知	ch	j as in "jump"
ch	啟	ch'	ch as in "church," strongly aspirated
sh	詩	sh	sh as in "shore"
r	日	j	r pronounced but not rolled, tending towards the z in "azure"
z	資	ts, tz	ds as in "deeds"
c	雌	ts'	ts as in "tsar," strongly aspirated
s	思	s, ss, sz	s as in "sister"

In annotating the Chinese characters, the letters zh, ch and sh may be simplified as ʒ, ĉ and š.

Finals Ending in "N" or "Ng"

Finals	Illustrative Chinese Characters	Wade System	Approximate English Equivalents
an	安	an	ahn
ian	烟	ien	ien as in "lenient"
uan	弯	uan	oo ahn
üan	冤	yüan	no English equivalent
en	恩	ên	as "earn"
in	因	in	een as in "keen"
uen	温	wên	won as in "wonder"
ün	晕	yün	no English equivalent
ang	昂	ang	ahng
iang	央	iang	i ahng
uang	汪	uang	oo ahng
eng	the final as in "吟"	êng	no English equivalent
ing	英	ing	ing as in "sing"
ueng	翁	wêng	no English equivalent
ong	the final as in "轟"	ung	oo ng
iong	雍	yung	y oong

Note 1. Seven categories of syllables as represented by the characters 知, 蚩, 詩, 日, 資, 雌 and 思 take i as their vowel. They are spelt as zhi, chi, shi, ri, zi, ci and si respectively.

Note 2. The sound êrh is spelt er. As a final, it is represented by r. Thus: ertong (兒童 children), huar (花兒 flower).

Note 3. When used alone, the vowel e is spelt as ê.

Note 4. Y is used as a semi-vowel in syllables beginning with i when not preceded by consonants. Thus: yi (衣), ya (呀), ye (耶), yao (腰), you (憂), yan (烟), yin (因), yang (央), ying (英), yong (雍).

W is used as a semi-vowel in syllables beginning with u when not preceded by consonants. Thus: wu (烏), wa (蛙), wo (窩), wai (歪), wei (威), wan (弯), wen (温), wang (汪), weng (翁).

Y is used as a semi-vowel in syllables beginning with ü when not preceded by consonants. In this case the two dots above u are omitted. Thus: yu (迂), yue (約), yuan (冤), yun (晕).

In syllables beginning with the consonants j, q and x, the two dots above u are also omitted. Thus: ju (居), qu (区) and xu (虚). But in syllables beginning with the consonants n or l the two dots must be retained. Thus: nü (女), lü (吕).

Note 5. When preceded by consonants, iou, uei and uen are spelt as iu, ui and un. Thus: niu (牛), gui (旧), lun (论).

Note 6. In annotating the Chinese characters, the letters ng can be simplified as n.

4. TONE MARKS

To indicate tones, the following marks are used:

First tone	Second tone	Third tone	Fourth tone
—	/	∨	\
mā	má	mǎ	mà
媽 (mama)	麻 (hemp)	馬 (horse)	罵 (to scold)

The tone marks are put above the main vowels of syllables. When a syllable is neutral, no tone mark is called for. Thus: hǎu ma (好嗎 Is it good?)

5. THE DIVIDING SIGN

When a syllable preceded by a, o or e immediately follows another syllable and is liable to run into each other and cause confusion, the dividing sign " ' " is used. Example: pi'ao (皮袄 fur coat); without the sign it is piao (漂 to float).

**RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S
CONGRESS ON THE SCHEME FOR A
CHINESE PHONETIC ALPHABET**

*Adopted by the Fifth Session of the First National
People's Congress on February 11, 1958*

Having discussed the Motion on the Draft Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet submitted by Chou En-lai, Premier of the State Council, and the Report on the Current Work of Reforming the Written Language and the Draft Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet delivered by Wu Yu-chang, Director of the Committee for Reforming the Chinese Written Language, the First National People's Congress, at its fifth session, resolves: 1. that the Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet be approved; 2. that it agrees in principle with the Report on the Current Work of Reforming the Written Language and the Draft Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet delivered by Wu Yu-chang. Congress is of opinion that the simplification of the Chinese characters be continued; that the common speech be actively popularized; that the Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, as an aid in learning the Chinese characters and popularizing the common speech be taught first of all in normal, secondary and primary schools to gain experience, while gradually applying it in publications and other fields, and, from the experience and results in these fields, efforts be made to attain its further improvement.