

APPENDIX

A Guide to Zhuangwen Transcription

This appendix is designed as a guide to the pronunciation of *Zhuangwen* (Ch. 壯文, the “Zhuang script”). This is the official transcription developed and approved by the Chinese Government for Standard Zhuang, the official Zhuang language in Guangxi. *Zhuangwen* is used for published books, newspapers and other media, and for dictionaries, language textbooks, and scholarly writing.

During the 1950’s and 1960’s linguists developed a transcription for Zhuang that included both roman and cyrillic letters. It was revised in 1981 by the Minority Languages and Scripts Commission of the province, and is now an entirely romanised script. It requires no special characters, and can be written on an ordinary typewriter.

Following standard practice in China, *Zhuangwen* pronunciation will be presented and analyzed in terms of Initials, Rhymes, and Tones. It makes sense to introduce tones first, since the transcription of tones in *Zhuangwen* is what causes the most initial confusion.

TONES

There are eight tones in Standard Zhuang. Tones on open syllables are designated by a consonant letter attached to the end of the syllable. This consonant is not pronounced, but serves merely to indicate tone, in much the same as diacritical marks in other transcription systems. The tonal values given below are those for Standard Zhuang, which is based on the language of Wuming.

<i>Tone</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Example</i>
1st Tone	(no symbol)	24 ˊ	<i>son</i> ‘to teach’
2nd Tone	-z	21 ˋ	<i>mwngz</i> ‘you’
3rd Tone	-j	55 ˊˋ	<i>hwnj</i> ‘to ascend’
4th Tone	-x	42 ˋˋ	<i>max</i> ‘horse’
5th Tone	-q	35 ˊˊ	<i>gvaq</i> ‘to pass by’
6th Tone	-h	33 ˋˊ	<i>dah</i> ‘river’

For Tones 7 and 8, which are “checked” or “dead” syllables, tones are distinguished by a combination of the vowel (long or short) and the final consonant. For transcription of long and short vowels, see the section below on Rhymes.

<i>Tone</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Example</i>
7th Tone short	-p, -t, or -k	55 1	<i>daep</i> ‘liver’
7th Tone long	-p, -t, or -k	35 1	<i>dap</i> ‘pagoda’
8th Tone short	-b, -d, or -g	33 1	<i>daeb</i> ‘to pile on’
8th Tone long	-b, -d, or -g	33 1	<i>dab</i> ‘to bend’

INITIALS

There are 22 initials in Standard Zhuang. Their values are given in alphabetical order below:

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>IPA Equivalent</i>	<i>Example</i>
b	p	<i>bae</i> (pe ¹) ‘to go’
by	pj	<i>bya</i> (pja ¹) ‘fish’
c	c	<i>caez</i> (cei ²) ‘together’
d	t	<i>dawh</i> (teu ⁶) ‘chopsticks’
f	f	<i>fangz</i> (fa:ŋ ²) ‘ghost’
g	k	<i>gwn</i> (kum ¹) ‘to eat’
gv	kv	<i>gvaz</i> (kβa ²) ‘right, right-hand’
gy	kj	<i>gyaeuj</i> (kjeu ³) ‘head’
h	h	<i>haj</i> (ha ³) ‘five’
l	l	<i>lwg</i> (lu ⁶) ‘child, baby’
m	m	<i>mieng</i> (mi:ŋ ¹) ‘ditch’
mb	βb	<i>mbarj</i> (βba:n ³) ‘village’
my	mj	<i>myaiz</i> (mjei ²) ‘saliva’
n	n	<i>naz</i> (na:²) ‘wet-field’
nd	βd	<i>ndei</i> (βdei ¹) ‘good’
ng	ŋ	<i>ngoenz</i> (ŋon ²) ‘day’
ngv	ŋv	<i>ngveih</i> (ŋβei ⁶) ‘kernel’
ny	ŋ	<i>nyi</i> (ŋi ¹) ‘to listen’
r	ɣ	<i>raemx</i> (ɣem ⁴) ‘water’
s	θ	<i>sang</i> (θa:ŋ ¹) ‘high, tall’
v	β	<i>vunz</i> (βun ²) ‘human being’
y	j	<i>yah</i> (ja:⁶) ‘grandmother’

Note that zero-initial words begin directly with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u, w) in *Zhuangwen*. Such words are pronounced with an initial glottal stop, which however is not indicated by the transcription. Thus *imq* 'full, sated' is pronounced ʔim⁵, *ok* 'to come out, go out' is pronounced ʔo:k⁷, and *wng* 'over there, yonder' is pronounced ʔwn⁵. The initial ʔj (as in ʔjou⁵ 'to be at') found in many Northern Zhuang dialects is rendered as 'y': thus ʔjou⁵ is rendered as *youq*.

RHYMES

There are 108 rhymes in Standard Zhuang. Rhymes are composed of one of the six vowels (a, e, i, o, u, or w), with or without a coda (m, n, ng, p, t, k), or a diphthong. There is a distinction between long and short vowels for all vowels except /e/. Rhymes can be put in tabular form as follows, giving first plain vowels and diphthongs (A), rhymes with nasal codas (B), and dead-syllable rhymes in 7th Tone (C) and 8th Tone (D):

<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>w</i>
A										
a		e	i		o		u		w	
ai	ae	ei			oi		ui		wi	
au	aeu	eu	iu		ou					
B										
am	aem	em	iem	im	om	oem	uem	um		
an	aen	en	ien	in	on	oen	uen	un	wen	wn
ang	aeng	eng	ieng	ing	ong	oeng	ueng	ung		wng
C										
ap	aep	ep	iep	ip	op	oep	uep	up		
at	aet	et	iet	it	ot	oet	uet	ut	wet	wt
ak	aek	ek	iek	ik	ok	oek	uek	uk		wk
D										
ab	aeb	eb	ieb	ib	ob	oeb	ueb	ub		
ad	aed	ed	ied	id	od	oed	ued	ud	wed	wd
ag	aeg	eg	ieg	ig	og	oeg	ueg	ug		wg

In general, long vowels have a duration noticeably longer than that of short vowels. Short vowels are always short in duration. Vowel values are as follows:

short a	IPA ɐ	a short 'a' like the first 'a' in English 'battalion'
long a	IPA a:	a long 'a' like the 'a' in English 'father', only further forward
long e	IPA e:	like the 'ei' in 'neighbour', but with constant

		vowel quality throughout, rather than diphthongised
long i	IPA i:	'i' as in 'machine'. When followed by a coda and written 'ie', followed by a neutralising offglide (fleeting 'uh' sound)
short i	IPA ɪ	short 'i' as in 'bit'
long o	IPA o:	long 'o' as in 'note'
short o	IPA ə	a short 'o' halfway between IPA o and ø.
long u	IPA u:	'oo' as in 'moon'. When followed by a coda and written 'ue', followed by a neutralising offglide (fleeting 'uh' sound)
short u	IPA u	a short 'u' as in 'put'
long w	IPA ʊ:	no English equivalent. Like a long 'u' sound, but with the lips unrounded. When followed by a coda and written 'we', followed by a neutralising offglide (fleeting 'uh' sound)
short w	IPA ʊ	like long w, but half as long in duration.

Note that 'ae' in the transcription always indicates a short 'a' except when it is on its own and not followed by a vowel (u) or coda. In words like *bae* 'to go', it sounds like the vowel in English 'die', except more truncated.

Note that 'oe' always denotes a short 'o', but that 'ie', 'ue', and 'we' indicate long 'i', long 'u' and long 'w' respectively. For 'ie', 'ue', and 'we' this is logical because of the presence of the offglide.

Note finally that the codas b, d and g are not voiced consonants, but sound exactly the same as p, t and k. The spelling difference here indicates a difference in tone (Tone 8 as opposed to Tone 7).

A comparative table of rhymes in *Zhuangwen* and IPA equivalents follows:

<i>Zhuangwen</i>	IPA	<i>Zhuangwen</i>	IPA
a	a:	ad	a:t
ai	a:i	ag	a:k
au	a:u		
am	a:m	ae	ɛ:i
an	a:n	aeu	ɛ:u
ang	a:ŋ	aem	ɛ:m
ap	a:p	aen	ɛ:n
at	a:t	aeng	ɛ:ŋ
ak	a:k	aep	ɛ:p
ab	a:p	aet	ɛ:t

Zhuangwen IPA

aek	ɛk
aeb	ɛp
aed	ɛt
aeg	ɛk
e	e
ei	ei
eu	eu
em	e:m
en	e:n
eng	e:ŋ
ep	ɛ:p
et	ɛ:t
ek	ɛ:k
eb	ɛ:p
ed	ɛ:t
eg	ɛ:k
i	i:
iu	iu
iem	i: ² m
ien	i: ² n
ieng	i: ² ŋ
iep	i: ² p
iet	i: ² t
iek	i: ² k
ieb	i: ² p
ied	i: ² t
ieg	i: ² k
im	ɪm
in	ɪn
ing	ɪŋ
ip	ɪp
it	ɪt
ik	ɪk
ib	ɪp
id	ɪt
ig	ɪk
o	o:
oi	oi
ou	ou

Zhuangwen IPA

om	o:m
on	o:n
ong	o:ŋ
op	o:p
ot	o:t
ok	o:k
ob	o:p
od	o:t
og	o:k
oem	əm
oen	ən
oeng	ɛŋ
oep	ɛp
oet	ɛt
oek	ɛk
oeb	ɛp
oed	ɛt
oeg	ɛk
u	u:
ui	ui
uem	u: ² m
uen	u: ² n
ueng	u: ² ŋ
uep	u: ² p
uet	u: ² t
uek	u: ² k
ueb	u: ² p
ued	u: ² t
ueg	u: ² k
um	um
un	un
ung	uŋ
up	up
ut	ut
uk	uk
ub	up
ud	ut
ug	uk
w	u:

Zhuangwen IPA

wi	wi
wen	w: ² n
wet	w: ² t
wed	w: ² t

wn	wn
wng	wŋ
wt	wt
wk	wk
wd	wt
wg	wk