

WADE-GILES VERSUS PINYIN CJK DATABASE FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE LIBRARY SYSTEM

Bick-har Yeung
East Asian Librarian, University of Melbourne Baillieu Library
Member of the Technical Committee
of the Australian National CJK Project

Summary

This article is a modification of a paper which was tabled at the East Asian Collection Users' Committee of the University of Melbourne Library in March 1996. Its purpose was to seek advice from the Committee over the adoption of the Pinyin or the Wade-Giles CJK (Chinese-Japanese-Korean) database of the Australian National CJK Service for the University of Melbourne Library System. Advantages and disadvantages of both systems were analysed.

Introduction

The first systems of romanisation were devised by foreigners in China, beginning in the early seventeenth century with the Jesuits. The most popular romanisation systems used nowadays are Wade-Giles and Pinyin. Sir Thomas Francis Wade published a textbook in 1859 entitled *Yü yen tzu erh chi*, revised in 1867. The romanisation that Sir Thomas adopted was based on the dialect of Peking. This romanisation system became popular after Herbert A. Giles modified the system in minor details and published *A Chinese English Dictionary* in 1892, revised and enlarged in 1912. This system is what we now call Wade-Giles romanisation. It has been widely adopted in English-speaking countries. Reference works of all kinds are based on Wade-Giles as well as most major libraries adopt it in their catalogues. Pinyin (Han yu pin yin) was approved by the National People's Congress in 1958. Pinyin was considered to give the pronunciation of Chinese characters, to transcribe the common speech, serving as a useful means of teaching and learning the common speech (Modern Standard Chinese); to serve as a common basis on which China's national minorities may create or reform their written languages; to help foreigner to learn Chinese and thus to promote cultural exchange. The State Council of the People's Republic of China has decided to use the Pinyin to standardise the romanisation of PRC names and places. It was used since 1 January 1979. Thus Pinyin has been introduced in a large number of universities and other teaching establishments.

The Australian National Chinese-Japanese-Korean Service

The Australian National Chinese-Japanese-Korean (CJK) Service went live in July 1996. The system is a national bibliographic utility containing bibliographic data and holding information of Chinese, Japanese and Korean language materials held by Australian major libraries which have the biggest CJK collection, namely the University of Melbourne, Australian National

University (ANU), National Library of Australia (NLA), University of Sydney, Monash University, Queensland University, Griffith University and some new members who recently joined the system in 1996. The Australian National CJK System allows users to input, retrieve and display of CJK characters. Member libraries adopt the system for cataloguing CJK language materials as well as for CJK OPAC. The system also serves as an online national union CJK catalogue.

Adoption of the Pinyin and Wade-Giles romanisation system of cataloguing Chinese language materials has been a controversial issue in recent years in the library world. The Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) accepts both Pinyin and Wade-Giles romanisation systems. The Library of Congress issued a Pinyin draft proposal in 1990 and this draft is still "hanging in the air". So far the Wade-Giles system is still being used by libraries with the older collections and in university libraries. Before the creation of the National Australian CJK database, the National CJK Project Consortium members were concerned about which romanisation scheme to adopt for the National CJK Service. Some Consortium members favoured Pinyin, while some stayed with Wade-Giles. Individual libraries have strong reasons to support their preferred romanisation method. Consortium members eventually voted for the Australian National CJK Service to have two databases, namely, the Chinese (Pinyin)-Japanese-Korean database and the Chinese (Wade-Giles)-Japanese-Korean database. Consortium members could thus select the favoured database to work on and have the CJK records in their preferred romanisation downloaded onto their local library system.

Guidelines for Pinyin adopted by the Australian National CJK Project

The National CJK Technical Committee passed the following resolutions as the Standards for Pinyin romanisation:

CJK-TC-1995-RES 5

That, where a cataloguer inputs data into the National CJK System, each Chinese character should be input as one Pinyin syllable, except for proper and geographic names, where the syllables should be joined.

CJK-TC-1995-RES 12

In the Pinyin database:

- where the preferred form in the Library of Congress Name Authority (LCNA) is a pure Wade-Giles form, the preferred form in the Pinyin database should be that Wade-Giles form converted to Pinyin.
- where the preferred form in LCNA is an "established" form, ie, not a pure Wade-Giles form, for instance Chiang Kai-shek and Confucius, the preferred form in the Pinyin database should be that "established form".

Advantages and disadvantages of both systems in the University of Melbourne environment

The University of Melbourne Library has been using the Wade-Giles romanisation for the cataloguing of Chinese and Western language materials. The Department of Chinese at the University of Melbourne teaches Chinese

language using Pinyin romanisation. Due to the availability of the Pinyin database from the Australian National CJK Service, the library underwent a consultation process with the East Asian Users' Committee of the University of Melbourne Library seeking advice as to which database (Pinyin or Wade-Giles) should be adopted by the Library. The author provided the advantages and disadvantages of adopting either system to the Committee for consideration. Details are given below.

Wade-Giles system.

Advantages:

1. The Wade-Giles system is an international standard for cataloguing Chinese language materials. The Library of Congress has adopted the Wade-Giles romanisation for all Chinese personal names, corporate and conferences names, uniform titles, series titles as the preferred headings for name and subject headings. ABN also adopts the same practices. It is consistent in cataloguing practices regarding all Chinese works and translations. Users can extract works in all languages held in the Library system in relation to one particular name or subject.
2. Most Western libraries and the majority of libraries in Australia have adopted the Wade-Giles romanisation, especially the major collections, such as ANU, NLA, and the University of Sydney.
3. Current cataloguing practice for Chinese language uses the Wade-Giles system. The card catalogue, serials catalogue, author numbers of Chinese language materials, and serials bound titles of the East Asian Collection also use the Wade-Giles system.

Disadvantages:

1. The Department of Chinese of the University of Melbourne uses Pinyin for teaching, in line with Chinese language teaching throughout Australia. A majority of the East Asian Collection users know Pinyin better than Wade-Giles.
2. There has been a tendency to adopt Pinyin in libraries because of the availability of Pinyin database provided by the Australian National CJK Service. When the National CJK system is migrated to ABN in the future, there will be only one database and Pinyin is predicted to be adopted by ABN at that time.

Pinyin romanisation

Advantages:

1. Users are familiar with the Pinyin romanisation.
2. If standardisation of romanisation is to occur, Pinyin would be strongly preferred. Since the Australian National CJK project has successfully converted the Wade-Giles bibliographic database to Pinyin, the Library of Congress has recently reconsidered the adoption of Pinyin and a draft Pinyin proposal was issued to American libraries adopting the Pinyin Guidelines used by the Australian National CJK Service. It was reported by Linda Groom at the recent September 1996 NCJK Technical Committee meeting that the LC Pinyin proposal was widely supported by American libraries. As a result, there is an increased likelihood that the Library of Congress will adopt the Pinyin for cataloguing Chinese

language materials in the near future. Thus the Pinyin Guidelines derived by the Australian National CJK Project Technical Committee could become the international standard of Pinyin romanisation. Pinyin surely has a better potential than Wade-Giles.

Disadvantages:

1. Jennifer Murphy, the Cataloguing Standard Librarian of the University of Melbourne Library commented, "Wade-Giles vs Pinyin, please remember that Library of Congress names and subject headings for Chinese are romanised in Wade-Giles, with (or without) Pinyin references, and Wade-Giles is still the preferred options for ABN precisely for this reason. Any authority we get from ABN will prefer the Wade-Giles form, and the romanised CJK records will be sharing the ordinary INNOPAC library system". If Pinyin is adopted for Chinese and Japanese language materials in the University of Melbourne Library local database, there will be two romanisation systems in the library's database. Western language materials from ABN use Wade-Giles, whereas CJK materials from the Australian National CJK system will be in Pinyin. Thus the INNOPAC authority file will become messy. As a result, users will have to retrieve CJK records by typing Pinyin, and western language materials by typing Wade-Giles.
2. Pinyin itself has problems in the adoption of phrases or single words. The National CJK Pinyin guidelines specifies single words, except for personal names, geographical names and established headings. Chinese language teaching adopts phrases in sentences. The practices employed by libraries and in teaching are inconsistent. This can be very confusing to library users.

Decision making and Pinyin implementation

No matter which romanisation system is adopted, each always has its "pros" and "cons". From the library point of view, Wade-Giles is definitely preferable as the library can maintain a quality database. From the users' point of view, Pinyin is surely preferred. The University of Melbourne Library is a library of high renown, providing quality services to its users. In order to decide which romanisation should be adopted for the library database, a consultation process went through the East Asian Collection Users Committee. Consensus opted for Pinyin. The East Asian Librarian thus recommended to the Library the adoption of Pinyin romanisation for the cataloguing of CJK materials. Starting from September 1996 the East Asian Collection was catalogued onto the Australian National CJK Service adopting the Pinyin database.

Conclusion

The disadvantages of Pinyin are problems which the University of Melbourne Library is going to face. The solutions of such problems can be addressed as follows:

1. The University of Melbourne Library will download the ABN Authority File to the INNOPAC system in future. There will be a database cleanup process when the National CJK Pinyin database is downloaded. Cross references will be established for predominant authors.
2. The University Library will strengthen the cataloguing skills classes by emphasising the two romanisation systems adopted by the Library. Guidelines for Pinyin romanisation will also be taught.

The University of Melbourne is the first large Chinese Collection in the Country to adopt the Pinyin romanisation for its library system. Colleagues of the East Asian Collection are prepared to overcome the difficulties encountered in the near future. However, we do believe that the earlier we convert to Pinyin, the more benefits will be obtained by the library users.

Bibliography

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