

Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography

jīqì (n) machine	diànshìjī (n) TV set	jiāting (n) household
dàjiā(pro) everyone	liǎojiě (v) to understand	shìjiè (n) world
bǐjiào (v) to compare	yǒngjiǔ (v) eternal	jiànshè (v) to con- struct
jiǎngshī (n) lecturer	jīntiān (n) today	jìnlái (v) to come in
Beijing (n) Beijing	tiānqì (n) weather	érqiě (conj) and, also
qiūtiān (n) autumn	qiánmiàn (n) front	qiángjiàn (a) robust
mǔqīn (n) mother	fùqīn (n) father	gǎnqíng (n) feelings
pínqióng (a) poor	dōngxi (n) thing	xiàtiān (n) summer
xiězi (v) to write	xiǎoshuō (n) fiction	xiūlǐ (v) to repair
xiànzài (ad) now	xiǎngxiàng (v) to imagine	xiǎngxìn (v) to believe
xīngxīng (n) star	xiōng'è (a) fierce	

12. 3 r— Suffixed Syllables

In Section 2.1 we introduced the retroflex vowel *er*. Certain words in Putonghua, most of them nouns, can take this retroflex

Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography

as a suffix. The addition of er to a word can indicate the small size of the object named, the speaker's affection or intimacy toward it, or a euphemistic tone. Phonetically, what happens when er becomes a suffix is that it drops its e and becomes simply r; this r is hooked onto a syllable of the word in question, which is then called an r-suffixed syllable. In this way huā (flower) plus er becomes huār, niǎo (bird) plus er becomes niǎor, and so on.

In writing, the r-suffix is indicated by simply adding an r onto the existing syllable, as can be seen in the left-hand column below. In speech, however, the addition of r causes all sorts of changes in pronunciation, different for each different syllable it hooks up with. See the list below for a detailed presentation of the pronunciation of each type of r-suffixed syllable.

<i>Written form</i>	<i>Actual pronunciation</i>
-ar (mǎr, horse)	-ar (mǎr)
-air (gǎir, lid)	-ar (gǎr)
-anr (pánr, plate)	-ar (pár)
-aor (bǎor, bundle)	-aor (bǎor)
-angr (gǎngr, jar)	-ān(gǎn)
-or (mòr, dust)	-or (mòr)
-our (hóur, monkey)	-our (hóur)
-ongr (chóngr, insect)	-ōn(chōn)
-er (gēr, song)	-er (gēr)
-eir (bèir, back)	-er (bèr)

Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography

-enr (ménr, door)	-er (mér)
-engr (dēngr, lamp)	- ěr(dě̄r)
-ir * (zìr, Chinese character)	-er (zèr)
-ir (mír, rice)	-ier (mǐer)
-iar (xiór, box)	-iar (xiór)
-ier (diér, saucer)	-ier (diér)
-iaor (niǎor, bird)	-iaor (niǎor)
-iur (qiúr, ball)	-iour (qióur)
-ianr (diǎnr, bit)	-iar (diǎr)
-iàngr (qiǎngr, tune)	- iǎr(qiǎr)
-inr (xīnr, core)	-ier (xīer)
-ingr (líng, bell)	- iě̄r(liě̄r)
-iongr (xióng, bear)	- iō̄r(xiō̄r)
-ur (tùr, rabbit)	-ur (tùr)
-uar (huōr, flower)	-uar (huōr)
-uor (huór, work)	-uor (huór)
-uair (kuàir, piece)	-uar (kuàr)
-uir (shuǐr, water)	-uer (shuě̄r)
-uanr (wánr, to play)	-uar (wár)
-uangr (kuāngr, basket)	-uā̄r(kuā̄r)
-unr (lúnr, wheel)	-uer (luér)
-úr (qǔr, song)	-úer (qǔer)

-üer (juér, peg)	-üer (juér)
-üanr (quǎnr, loop)	-üar (quǎr)
-ünr (qúnr, skirt)	-üer (qúer)

Notes:

- ã, õ, ã indicate nasalized a, o, e.
- The *-i* marked with an asterisk indicates either of the apical vowels that follow zh, ch, sh, r and z, c, s.
- See the following section for the pronuciations of ü, üe, üan, and ün.

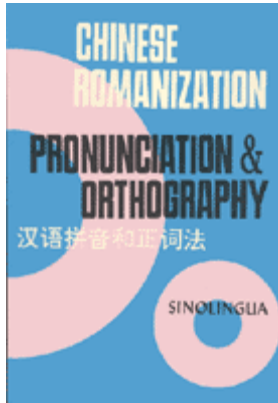
13. Vowel Constructions with ü: üe, üan, and ün

13. 1 Pronunciation

There are three vowel constuctions in Putonghua that begin with ü: one all-vowel construction, üe, and the two vowel-nasal constuctions üan and ün. Their pronunciations are discussed below.

üe First form the simple vowel ü, and then add e onto it. This e, however, is not the simple vowel we encountered early on; it is the same e as that of *-ie* in Section 11.1, similar to the “e” of English “bed”. e is the main vowel of üe, and carries the tone marker. Practice reading: üē, üé, üě, üè.

üan First form ü, and then add onto it the nasal construc-



This is an excerpt from *Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography*, by Yin Binyong, translated and edited by Mary Felley.

© 1990, [Sinolingua](http://www.sinolingua.com)

Yīn Bīnyōng, *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn hé Zhèngcífǎ*

尹斌庸, 汉语拼音和正词法

尹斌庸, 漢語拼音和正詞法

This PDF version was made by www.pinyin.info, where it appears with the kind permission of Sinolingua.

Pīnyīn.info *a guide to the writing of
Mandarin Chinese in romanization*