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SOME PROBLEMS OF SPELLING VIETNAMESE TOPONYMS AND ANTHROPONYMS IN RUSSIAN

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Abstract. In the course of development of Internet, search systems and scientometrics, a unified standard of spelling proper names, toponyms and anthroponyms among them, acquires special importance. The purpose of this article is to suggest such a standard for the papers for publication in editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA. Based on the rules set in previous years, there are some suggestions for spelling Vietnamese letters and their combinations in toponyms and anthroponyms in Russian, as well as the written form of Vietnamese personal names, also in references.

Keywords: the Vietnamese language, the Russian language, practical transcription, toponyms, anthroponyms, temple names.

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Introduction

The change of the geopolitical situation and Russia's "turn to the East" set Vietnam into the focus of Russian officials, businessmen and scientists. The number of publications about this country increases. The major part of research-works on Vietnam has been prepared and issued by the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS Institute of China and Contemporary Asia, including its "Russian Journal of Vietnamese Studies". The authors of articles on political science and economics, demography and history, religion, culture and philology are not only Russian researchers from different regions of this country, but also those from Vietnam, Australia, France and other countries. Their works contain a lot of Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms. English articles usually follow Vietnamese spelling omitting diacritic marks, while Russian authors and translators of English articles must follow certain rules for spelling Vietnamese geographical and personal names. In the course of development of Internet, search systems and scientometrics, a unified standard of

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spelling proper names, toponyms and anthroponyms among them, acquire special importance. The purpose of this article is to suggest such a standard for the papers for publication in the editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA.

The polemics on the ways of spelling foreign proper names in Russian has been conducted for many years. Some researchers (A.A. Reformatsky, B.A. Starostin, A.V. Superanskaya etc.) thought that onyms should be borrowed using practical transcription with exception of those traditionally transliterated in the language, other (O.O. Sorokina, A.V. Fedorov) stood up for transliteration as the leading way of spelling foreign proper names, others acknowledged the mixed way, a combination of the two previous ones.

All these variants can be met in Russian spelling Vietnamese geographical and personal names. Yet the main way is transcription. The first attempt to create Russian transcription for Vietnamese words belongs to J. Minin (Nguyen Khanh Toan), the author of the first manual of Vietnamese (Annamese), issued in Leningrad in 1933. An orderly system of Vietnamese-Russian practical transcription was developed by T.T. Mhitaryan and published in her “Vietnamese Phonetics” [1959]. Professor G.P. Serdyuchenko suggested his own variant of transcription in his book “Russian Transcription for Languages of Foreign East” [1961]. In 1967 based on T.T. Mhitaryan’s transcription there was published “The Instructions for Spelling Vietnamese Geographical Names on Maps”. With some changes and additions, it was the basis for “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnam’s Geographical Names” [1973], published by the Central Research Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Survey and Cartography (CRIGASC). That book took into consideration the conclusions of T.T. Mhitaryan’s book “Vietnamese Toponyms Spelled by Means of Russian Graphics” [1962] and E.M. Murzayev’s article “Vietnam’s Geographical Names” [1969]. In 1988 “The Instructions” served the basis for “A Dictionary of Vietnam’s Geographical Names” issued by CRIGASC. The Preface said that the purpose was “to establish the Russian unified scientifically based spelling of Vietnamese toponyms on maps, in the press, in scientific literature and guides, as well as in other Soviet editions” [Slovar’... 1988: 3].

In the 21st century, this problem has been touched by the translators and commentators of “The Complete Annals of Dai Viet (Dai Viet su ky toan thu)” [2002]. In the first volume of this epoch-making work, they set the rules for spelling names and terms having been used while translating “Toan Thu”. In 2014 D.D. Zvorykin’s article “Russian Spelling of Vietnam’s Geographical Names” was published in “The Ecology of Vietnam’s Inland Waters”. M.A. Syunnerberg raises problems of transcription of Vietnamese names in his work “The System of Vietnamese Given and Family Names” [2014]. I.V. Britov addresses the matter of spelling Vietnamese anthroponyms and toponyms in his wonderful book “To Understand the Language of the Dragon’s Descendants” [2021]. He has suggested some changes for T.T. Mhitaryan’s practical transcription system.

Suggested rules for Russian spelling of Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms

This article discusses the rules set on the ground of the above-said, which are suggested to follow when spelling Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms in articles for the editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA. The discrepancies with the existing variants will be marked and commented separately. All Vietnamese double-syllable and polysyllable geographical names are single words in Russian.

Vietnamese spelling, examples	Russian spelling, examples	Notes
<p>a ă â Ma, Lâm Thao, Câu</p> <p>a ă â Nha Trang, Chàm Chù, Gia Hối</p>	<p>a Ma, Ламтхао, Кау</p> <p>я Нячанг, Тямтю, Зяхой</p>	<p>Except after letter combinations <i>nh, ch, gi</i></p> <p>In the words with Tây – э Tây Ninh – Тэйнинь</p> <p>In the words with Plây – e Plây Cu – Плейку</p> <p>After letter combinations <i>nh, ch, gi</i></p>
<p>b Bắc Bộ</p>	<p>б Бакбо</p>	
<p>c Cà Mau</p>	<p>к Камау</p>	
<p>ch Bạch Mã, Bích</p> <p>ch Chứa Chan</p> <p>ch Chàm Chu, Châu Phú, Cheo Reo, Chợ Gạo, Chí</p>	<p>ть Батьма, Бить</p> <p>ть Тьятян</p> <p>т Тямтю, Тяуфу, Теорео, Тёгао, Ти</p>	<p>At the end of a syllable</p> <p>Before <i>u</i></p> <p>Before the rest vowels (the vowels <i>u, e, ẽ, я, ю</i> are used to soften a consonant)</p>
<p>d Hải Dương, Dững</p>	<p>з Хайзыонг, Зунг</p>	
<p>đ Đắc Lắc, Đức</p>	<p>д Даклак, Дык</p>	
<p>e, ê Bé, Chê, Nghiêm, Nguyệt,</p> <p>e, ê Én, Huế</p>	<p>e Бе, Те, Нгием, Нгует</p> <p>э Эн, Хюэ</p>	<p>After consonants and in the combinations <i>iê u uyê</i></p> <p>At the beginning of a word and after vowels</p>
<p>f Fiji</p>	<p>ф Фиджи</p>	
<p>g Gành Rai</p>	<p>г Ганьрай</p>	<p>Everywhere but the position before <i>i</i> и <i>e, ê</i></p>
<p>gh Ghép</p>	<p>г Геп</p>	<p>Before <i>e, ê</i></p>

gi Gia Ray, Gió, Giôn, Giếng Đày	з Зярай, Зё, Зён, Зиенгдай	Before <i>a, ă, o, ô</i> , which are spelt <i>я, ẽ</i> to soften a consonant With the diphthong <i>iê</i> is read <i>зие</i>
h Hòa Bình	х Хоабинь	
i, y Bình Định, Nà Nghịu, Quy Hóa	и Биньдинь, Нангиу, Куихоа	After consonants, in the syllables <i>qui (quy), hui (huy),</i> <i>khui (khuy), thui (thui)</i>
i, y Hội An	й Хойан	After vowels
iê Diên Vọng	ие Зиенвонг	<i>Exclusions:</i> Việt Nam — Вьетнам Điện Biên Phủ — Дьенбьенфу Ngô Đình Diệm — Нго Динь Зьем
k Kiên Giang	к Киензянг	
kh Khoai Lang	кх Кхоайланг	
l Lai Châu	л Лайтяу	
m Minh Sơn	м Миньшон	
n Nam Định	н Намдинь	
ng Quảng Nam	нг Куангнам	
ngh Nghệ An	нг Нгеан	Before <i>e, ê, i, y</i>

<p>nh Vĩnh, Như Xuân</p>	<p>нь Винь, Ньысуан</p>	<p>At the end of a syllable and before <i>u</i></p>
<p>nh Nhé, Nhơn Hòa, Nhu Gia</p>	<p>н Не, Нёнхоа, Нюзя</p>	<p>Before <i>e, ê, o, ô, ơ, i, u</i> which are spelled <i>ě, u, ю</i> to soften a consonant</p>
<p>o, ô, ơ Ngọc Sơn, Cần Thơ</p>	<p>о Нгокшон, Кантхо</p>	<p>Everywhere but after <i>ch, nh,</i> <i>gi</i></p>
<p>o, ô, ơ Chợ Mới, Gio Linh</p>	<p>ё Тёмой, Зёлинь</p>	<p>After <i>ch, nh, gi</i></p>
<p>p Hiệp Hòa</p>	<p>п Хиепхоа</p>	<p>Found at the beginning of a syllable only in foreign words Pa Mam — Памам</p>
<p>ph Phú Thọ</p>	<p>ф Футхо</p>	
<p>q Quy Nhơn</p>	<p>к Куинён</p>	
<p>r Ráng</p>	<p>ж Жанг</p>	
<p>r Rạch Sỏi</p>	<p>р Ратьшой</p>	<p>In geographical names of Central and South Vietnam</p>
<p>s Sông Bé, Nghiêm Sơn</p>	<p>ш Шонгбе, Нгиемшон</p>	<p>Exclusion: Sài Gòn — Сайгон</p>
<p>t Tam Đảo</p>	<p>т Тамдао</p>	
<p>th Thái Bình</p>	<p>тх Тхайбинь</p>	
<p>tr Trung Bộ</p>	<p>ч Чунгбо</p>	

<p>u Huế, Nhu Quan, Thui Phả</p> <p>u Kon Tum, Thái Nguyên, Quy Nhơn</p>	<p>ю Хюэ, Нюкуан, Тхюифа</p> <p>у Контум, Тхайнгуен Куинён</p>	<p>After <i>ch, nh, gi</i>, in the combinations <i>uê, ui, uy, uyê</i> after <i>h, kh, l, th, x</i></p> <p>In the other cases</p>
<p>ư Tương Dương</p>	<p>ы Тьонгзыонг</p>	<p>After <i>ư</i> is also written <i>ы</i> Sùng Trâu – Шынгчай</p>
<p>v Vĩnh Phú, Vãn</p>	<p>в Виньфу, Ван</p>	
<p>x Xuân Long</p>	<p>с Суанлонг</p>	
<p>y Mỹ Tú, Quỳnh Lưu</p> <p>y Yên Châu, Mây</p>	<p>и Миту, Куиньлыу</p> <p>й Йентяу, Май</p>	<p>After consonants and in the letter combination <i>uy</i></p> <p>At the beginning of a syllable and after vowels, except <i>u</i></p> <p>Voiceless in the letter combination <i>uyê</i> Nguyễn – Нгуен</p>

We are going to comment those cases which differ from other similar rules. Recently there has appeared a tendency to spell Vietnamese soft consonants *ch, nh, gi* with the use of the soft sign. The SRV Prime-Minister *Pham Minh Chinh* became *Фам Минь Тьинь*, the city *Quy Nhon* was turned into *Куиньон*, etc. By the way, this variant has been suggested by the translators of “*Toan thu*” and by I.V. Britov [Britov 2021: 71]. Yet, we believe, it is worth to save the variant suggested in “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnam’s Geographical Names”, when the letters/sounds *e, ê, u, ю, я* soften the consonants before them. This is the closest variant in terms of Russian voicing. The only case requiring the soft sign for a consonant is its position before *u*, in order to show a soft consonant before the sound which does not soften it. M.A. Syunnerberg is right when arguing that correct spelling *ti* and *chi* is impossible in Russian, because in any case a consonant will be softened with the following vowel «*u*» (in Russian *tiến* and *chiến* sound the same). The Vietnamese form of a toponym or an anthroponym must be given in brackets when used for the first time in an academic work to identify them [Syunnerberg 2014: 60].

There are numerous toponyms with diphthong *iê* in Vietnamese. “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnamese Geographical Names”, and other editions following it suggest to spell this letter combination «*ьe*». The most well-known examples are *Вьетнам, Дьенбьенфу, Нго Динь Зьем*. But some researchers are of the opinion that in this way we must only spell the diphthongs in the words

with “heavy” tones or those before final *p, t, c, ch*, which “tighten”, or shorten, the diphthong, but in other cases it should be spelled «иє» [Ibid.: 61]. However, we agree with I.V. Britov that this rule will only complicate the process of spelling Vietnamese proper names in Russian and in a number of cases spoil the perception of the Vietnamese phonation, like with the word *Tiếp*, which does not sound «тъеп» in Vietnamese, as it is suggested to be spelled in Russian [Britov 2021: 67–74]. At the same time, any Russian will find it difficult to pronounce a consonant being softened with the soft sign and followed with the ioted «е». Therefore, we suggest to spell all the Vietnamese proper names with the diphthong *iê*, by means of the Russian letter combination «иє». But the toponyms and anthroponyms firmly embedded into the language and for a long time used in the academic, political and information space, must be spelled as usual. They are: «Вьетнам» and all its derivatives, «Дьенбьенфу», the place of the decisive battle in the First Indochina war, and «Нго Динь Зьем», the name of the first president of the Republic of Vietnam.

Complicated Vietnamese proper names

Before having taken their current Russian form, Vietnamese names had to undergo many changes. M.A. Syunnerberg writes about it with full knowledge in his work [Syunnerberg 2014]. At last, they arrived at the decision to write three elements of a Vietnamese name separately, each element with a capital letter (for example, *Phan Van Dong*). But Vietnamese, unlike the overwhelming majority of the peoples, are not satisfied with the only name, but change their names in the course of the life. First and foremost, it concerns rulers of the state. They used to leave behind their posthumous temple names (for example, *Le Thanh Tong*). Besides, they are named by the era of their governing. This is especially true of the *Nguyen*, the last Vietnamese dynasty. Its first emperor *Phuc Anh* received the temple name *Nguyen The To*, but he is more known as *Gia Long* by the era of his governing. In academic and reference literature you can find two variants of writing a temple name and a name by an era of governing, either like common names, when each element is written separately with a capital letter (*Le Thanh Tong, Gia Long*) or with the hyphen joining the last element (*Le Thanh-tong, Gia-long*). For the RAS ICCA editions we suggest to follow the rules set by the translators and editors of “Dai Viet su ky toan thu” [Polnoe sobranie... 2002: 54–55]. According to these rules, the first two elements of the emperors’ temple names are written with capital letters, and the last one with the hyphen: *Ле Тхань-тонг, Ле Тхай-то*. Names of eras are written as follows: double-syllable names – the first element with a capital letter, the second one with the hyphen; the whole word in italics (*Кань-хынг, Хонг-дык*); polysyllable ones – with separate double-syllable semantic components, each of them with the hyphen and separately from the others, the first one with a capital letter, the entire name in italics (*Тхиен-кам ти-бао*). Name-titles of nobility are written as follows: the name part (in one word), the hyphen, the title (in italics, in one word): Тай-выонг, Зунг-куокконг, Тхуатзыонг-хау. When first mentioned, names and titles should be written in Vietnamese in brackets.

How to get to scientific databases

We would like to touch another problem in this article, the problem of spelling names while citing sources. Correct lists of literature in academic articles are of great importance for various ratings both of academic editions and research-workers. In foreign English editions Vietnamese names are written in American English. i.e., in lists of literature you often see the full family name and initials instead of a middle name and a given name. Thus, *Nguyễn Anh Hùng* becomes *Nguyen*

A. H. If in the text there are references to the works of namesakes (Nguyen is a widely spread family name in Vietnam), sometimes having the same initials, the confusion is inevitable. Also, Vietnamese researchers themselves, publishing their works in foreign journals often write their names in the Western way, i.e., first a given name is written, and the family name is put at the end. Thus, instead of *Lê Thị Nguyên* (all the names are but examples) you may see Nguyen T. L. in the list, and sometimes it is hardly possible to know, who the person is.

Names of Vietnamese researchers in editions of the RAS ICCA should be written in the Vietnamese way, i.e., the family name, the middle name, the given name. In lists of literature, if an article is published in a Vietnamese edition, the author's name must be spelled with every diacritical mark. If an article is published in English, Vietnamese anthroponyms and toponyms are written in the text with no diacritic, but they must be given in Vietnamese in brackets when first mentioned.

Conclusion

The language is a living and constantly developing organism. In response to the changes in the environment, it changes itself in all its components: phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, graphics, so do the principles of spelling borrowed words. But the development of Internet, social nets, search systems hashtags etc. has aggravated the matter of unification, unified standards, and common rules, as never before. This small article is an attempt to make some changes in the rules of spelling Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms, set by specialists in the 20th century. We hope, it is a step towards a future common standard.

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