

# Re: New pronunciation of Bangalore

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- *From:* Mike Wright <[news@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Mon, 13 Nov 2006 20:33:20 -0600
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Oliver Cromm wrote:

\* Mike Wright wrote:

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Oliver Cromm wrote:

\* Paul D wrote:

Not  
knowing  
Turkish, I  
personally  
would have  
no idea how  
to say  
"Türkiye" if  
I saw it in  
an English  
text. (I  
could make  
a pretty  
good guess  
but it still  
wouldn't  
sound like  
English.)

Why do English-speaking  
people insist that the name  
of every place in  
the world has to sound like  
English?

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For the same reason that Japanese-speaking people insist that every place in the world has to sound like Japanese and Chinese-speaking people insist that every place in the world has to sound like Chinese?

Yeah, probably. So, self-centeredness it is.

No. It's called having a native language with a common phonology (and a writing system that more or less fits that phonology).

Actually, the Japanese and Chinese have an argument in favor of their pronunciations, because they can't express foreign pronunciations easily in writing. The interpretation of written English is fairly open. When in doubt, I am in favor of changing the writing to better accommodate the sound.

Nor can most of them easily go outside what their writing systems can indicate.

My wife pronounced "zipper" as "jippuh" as long as I knew her. She could force herself pronounce it pretty well, but if she was relaxed her native phonology would assert itself.

Can you tell me how a Japanese or a Chinese should pronounce Austin, Yorkshire, Paris, or Maghreb?

[...]

How are your tones when you pronounce Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, and Japanese place names? Are you careful about your Japanese vowel length?

[...]

Despite my clarifying statement, you get my totally wrong.

Sorry.

I don't want to prescribe any specific pronunciation, I don't insist that it should be understandable to the people from other countries. I am sceptical to changing well-ingrained names with a history, like "Turkey". But for place names that are not yet widely known, and even more so for personal

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names, I would welcome a little more audacity in trying a new sound.

People will pretty much do the best they can. You can try to demand more, but you probably won't get it.

I ask people to try the best they can, and not refrain from it for ideological reasons. Meanwhile I'm open for discussion on what is the best.

I don't think that cluelessness and a general lack of interest qualify as "ideological reasons".

The Japanese are constantly adding tricks to Kana writing to better represent foreign sounds. Relatively recent additions include representations for the sound /v/

Yet, though I've always seen it written <vairin>, I don't think I ever heard "violin" pronounced as anything but <baiorin>.

(I lived in Japan for about 7.5 years, in two installments, and played Bluegrass with several violin/fiddle players. Go to <<http://www.raccoonbend.com/personal/noself.html>> and scroll down to 1978.)

and for CV-combinations like /fa/, /fo/, which are foreign to Japanese. Also, there is a tendency to change the transcription of the final -er in words like computer, printer from /a:/ to /a/, which I welcome (especially in the case of my name).

That's the kind of thing I'm asking for. For English-speaking people, it would go a long way if they sometimes tried to better imitate the basic vowels that are common in many languages the world.

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Mike Wright

<http://www.raccoonbend.com>

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