

Re: Pinyin question

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-07/msg01030.html>

- *From:* "Nigel Greenwood" <ndsg_mmii@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 28 Jul 2005 03:03:26 -0700
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Richard Fangnail wrote:

- > Why did they insist on having a distinction between X/Sh? The only
- > difference is the placement of the tongue tip; to the speakers of most
- > languages, there is no difference in the sound. They are also in
- > complementary distribution.
- >
- > The result is to confuse the average person, esp. an English
- > speaker/reader but to impress Mensa members.

Possibly the system wasn't designed for the average English speaker.

FWIW The older GR (Gwoyeu Romatzyh / Guo2yu3 Luo2ma3zi4) system didn't distinguish between palatal & retroflex consonants, using <j ch sh> for both series. This works because GR uses "y" for the apical "i" sound (confusingly written "i" in Pinyin, as in "shi4").

If my explanation makes sense, you should be able to see that in GR "shi" = Pinyin "xi1". For details see:

<http://tinyurl.com/a2m6q>

Nigel

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ScriptMaster language resources (Chinese/Modern & Classical
Greek/IPA/Persian/Russian/Turkish):
<http://www.elgin.free-online.co.uk>

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- *References:*
 - ◆ *Pinyin question*
 - ◇ *From:* Richard Fangnail
 - Prev by Date: *ranorific – producing frogs*

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