

Re: Invention of the Alphabet

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-08/msg00349.html>

- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 04 Aug 2005 21:37:44 GMT
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Lee Sau Dan wrote:

>
> >>>> "Des" == Des Small <des.small@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> writes:
>
> Des> LSD! Your point is not a point, since it is false.
>
> Des> PTD's yardstick was that one criterion for Chinese wordiness
> Des> would be the headwords in the CHINESE TO ENGLISH side of a
> Des> Chinese-English dictionary.
>
> Des> For your comparison with English words to make sense, the
> Des> only honest thing to do would be to consider the ENGLISH TO
> Des> SOMETHING side of an English-Something dictionary.
>
> Easy. Take English-French. What's "railway" in French? "Chemin de
> fer". So, "chemin de fer" must be one single word, right? Even
> though "chemin" means "road" and "fer" means "iron"?

I believe most Gallicists would agree that "chemin de fer" is one word, but not for the reason you state. Perhaps you define "word" as 'thing with spaces around it'. But, back in my first posting that aroused your ire, did I use the term "word," or did I say "lexical item" or some such? (I know I didn't say "lexeme.")

> Des> Of the dictionaries to hand (Collins Gem French-English,
> Des> Langenscheidts Universal Wörterbuch Englisch-Deutsch, Berlitz
> Des> Dutch-English, Norsted's Engelska Fickordbok), none – not a
> Des> single one! – has an entry for "train station" under "train"
> Des> in the English to Foreign side.
>
> English German? Then "remember (inf.)" maps to "sich erinnern
> (inf.)". So, the Germans lexicographers are all wrong to write "sich
> erinnern" with a space in between. Since it's one word in English, it
> must be also 1 word in German, right?

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Peter T. Daniels grammatim@xxxxxxx

- *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*

- *References:*

- ◆ ***Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Dennis*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Dennis*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Alan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Harlan Messinger*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Harlan Messinger*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Peter T. Daniels*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Des Small*
- ◆ ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
 - ◇ *From: Lee Sau Dan*

- Prev by Date: ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
- Next by Date: ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
- Previous by thread: ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
- Next by thread: ***Re: Invention of the Alphabet***
- Index(es):

Re: Invention of the Alphabet

- ◆ Date
- ◆ Thread