

## Re: History of French

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Ruud Harmsen writes:

- > *So why do grown-ups always have an accent? Even those who started*
- > *early, and made a serious effort to perfectionate their accent in a*
- > *foreign language?*

They don't always have an accent. Some adult language learners speak without an accent. I've seen this, I know it is true, despite vehement assertions to the contrary by some linguists (all of whom coincidentally never manage to learn to speak any foreign language without an accent themselves).

- > *There is hardly any confusion. There is training and patterns. And*
- > *discovering what doesn't conform to them.*

There's a huge amount of confusion, that's why it takes years for a child to learn anything. How can one learn by pure trial and error without confusion? In the absence of confusion, every trial is error-free.

- > *You are right there. 14 hours a day, 7 days a week, for several years.*
- > *Every single activity a child is involved is also language-learning.*
- > *Any adult spending that much time on language learning would make*
- > *great progress too.*

Exactly. And some adults do that, which is one reason why some adults don't have accents.

- > *It is. In one sense it is, in the other it is not. And do distinguish*
- > *between language variants, if they learnt some other variant than the*
- > *standard at home, that's two different variants, each with its own*
- > *rules.*

Unfortunately, anything less than 100% congruence between variants is an obstacle to communication.

- > *Children learn grammar and vocabulary at the same time, before ever*
- > *having thought of the difference. That is the best method, even for*

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> *adult.*

Why do you say this?

> *English grammar is very complicated, especially if you use books that  
> don't think it works the same as Latin.*

English grammar is no more difficult than the grammar of any other language.

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Transpose hotmail and mxsmanic in my e-mail address to reach me directly.