

Re: History of French

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2004-09/3259.html>

From: Peter T. Daniels (grammatim_at_worldnet.att.net)

Date: 09/19/04

Date: Sun, 19 Sep 2004 22:37:00 GMT

Ruud Harmsen wrote:

>
> Sun, 19 Sep 2004 23:55:03 +0200: Mxsmanic <mxsmanic@hotmail.com>: in
> sci.lang:
>
> > Brian M. Scott writes:
> >
> > > Which pretty conclusively demonstrates that you're a
> > > worthless witness.
> >
> > Or that I know what's important and what's not.
>
> Small phonetic differences like the ones we are discussing now are not
> at all important, nobody cares, and they don't impede communication in
> the least.

Which is exactly why they occur and persist unmolested.

They are distinct from what Labov calls "markers" — the few traits that people are aware contribute to identification with a particular social class.

One of the greatest works of linguistics ever published is Labov's 1966 Columbia University diSSERTATION, which was available from the Center for Applied Linguistics. It is the founding document of sociolinguistics (despite the publication a few years earlier of the proceedings of a conference by that name). Moreover, it's immensely readable (unlike most of Labov's subsequent publications — Uriel Weinreich may have mentored him in more than the content of his work).

> *But that doesn't mean they are difficult to notice.*

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Peter T. Daniels

grammatim@att.net