

Re: I'm finally asking (re French)

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- *From:* Harlan Messinger <hmessinger.removethis@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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mb wrote:

On Nov 11, 6:06 am, Harlan Messinger
<hmessinger.removethis@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

mb wrote:

And how come he can easily avoid the glide in "leh"?
How come he pluralizes?

No one would argue that he was intending to give a precise phonetic rendering. Besides, he probably thinks (as many French people do) that "les" is /le/

No, this seems to be a case of le is /le/. As you say, the /e/ value is not phonemic except regionally

What I meant was, he isn't pluralizing, he was using "leh" to represent French "le", not French "les", which he would probably represent as "lay" or "ley". For us, "eh" is the "e" in "best" or French "mère". Although I think many Americans, for French "le", would use "luh". (I would guess that English people might use "lur" or "ler".)

(which he would render "lay" or "ley"—as would I for a casual audience) rather than /lE/.

Why would you mess things up with a glide when you know better (and it's so easy to avoid, as shown by that leh)

English-speakers who haven't studied the matter don't think or know about glides and many people who study French or, for that matter, Spanish or Italian or any of a number of other languages, aren't explicitly aware of the glide that distinguishes our vowel from the similar-sounding one in those languages. In informal phonetic representations, the "y" in "ey" isn't standing on its own to represent the glide. Instead, we think of "ey" as a digraph that represents the sound in "they", which we don't think of as a diphthong, but as a single sound, "long a". Similarly, "eh" to represent the pronunciation of the "e" in "best" is understood to represent what we

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perceive as a single sound, not as a vowel followed by an aspiration.

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