

Re: French verb conjugation: "je harcele"? or "je harcelle"?

Re: French verb conjugation: "je harcele"? or "je harcelle"?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2008-03/msg01048.html>

- *From:* "Brian M. Scott" <b.scott@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 27 Mar 2008 17:36:39 -0400
-

On Thu, 27 Mar 2008 16:54:38 -0400, Nathan Sanders <nsanders@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in <news:nsanders-9AFA39.16543827032008@xx> in sci.lang:

In article <jictb5-rjp.ln1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Adam Funk <a24061@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On 2008-03-25, Nathan Sanders wrote:

I think the issue is that French schwa is not actually "that sound" (a mid central unrounded vowel), but rather a mid front round vowel, somewhat like [o] and [oe] (in fact, I *think* I recall that it can be analyzed as just an unstressed positional variant of the /o/ and /oe/ phonemes, but I'm not sure about this).

(Oops, looks like my slashed-o and oe-ligature didn't come through correctly.)

I looked in a few apparently IPA-using French-English and French dictionaries: they all use "that upside-down-e" for the vowel in "je" and the first vowel in "jeter", but they use ø (slashed o) for the one in "jeu".

Re: French verb conjugation: "je harcele"? or "je harcelle"?

Are the dictionaries consistently misusing the IPA or idealizing French pronunciation, or am I wrong in thinking that "upside-down-e" means "schwa"?

I presume the former. My (admittedly limited) understanding is that the pronunciations of <je> and <jeu> differ (only? primarily?) in stress, not in vowel quality.

The author of the 'French' section of the Handbook of the IPA describes it as a central vowel with some rounding and places it squarely at the schwa point of the quadrilateral. It's been a while since I last heard much French, but that or something just a little further forward sounds about right to me, and unstressed [ø] definitely sounds wrong. It's possible that barred-o (X-SAMPA [8]) would be slightly more accurate, but in the absence of any other vowel in that range the more familiar [@] doesn't seem unreasonable.

[...]

Brian

.