

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

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2008-03/msg01140.html>

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- *From:* "Brian M. Scott" <b.scott@xxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sun, 30 Mar 2008 02:11:49 -0400
- 

On Sat, 29 Mar 2008 22:23:29 -0700 (PDT), mb  
<azythos2@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in  
<[news:bcda8bcb-f031-4e04-a672-e3efaa6538fb@xx](mailto:news:bcda8bcb-f031-4e04-a672-e3efaa6538fb@xx)>  
in sci.lang:

On Mar 29, 2:49 pm, "Brian M. Scott" <b.sc...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sat, 29 Mar 2008 14:35:08 -0700 (PDT), mb  
<azyth...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in  
<[news:ab6fc7f1-bca5-4579-91f2-7cf5dbffc84f@xx](mailto:news:ab6fc7f1-bca5-4579-91f2-7cf5dbffc84f@xx)>  
in sci.lang:

On Mar 28, 3:41 pm, "Brian M. Scott"  
<b.sc...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Fri, 28 Mar 2008 15:24:53 -0700 (PDT),  
mb  
<azyth...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in  
<[news:4b4bd937-0dc3-4a40-a22c-6cbf157b77af@xx](mailto:news:4b4bd937-0dc3-4a40-a22c-6cbf157b77af@xx)>  
in sci.lang:

On Mar 27, 2:36 pm, "Brian  
M. Scott"  
<b.sc...@xxxxxxxxxxx>  
wrote:

[...]

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

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-ø  
(X-SAMPA  
[8]) would  
be slightly  
more  
accurate,  
but in the  
absence of

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any other  
vowel in  
that  
range the  
more  
familiar  
[@] doesn't  
seem  
unreasonable.

Attempts at detailed  
description of effective  
pronunciations (by a foreign  
ear, who hears what it was  
trained to...) are irrelevant.  
What counts is the phoneme  
range and how it is defined  
(eme range) in the source  
language.

Dismissals made in ignorance of the facts  
are irrelevant.  
At least one of the two authors of that  
section is French.

Right. And my mother tongue is Chinese, and I am just  
babbling without any idea of any facts while Mr Ross has  
perfect command of all or them.

The authors of the article in question are Cécile Fougeron,  
of the Institut de Phonétique of the Univ. of Paris, and  
Caroline L. Smith. This 'Mr Ross' appears to be a figment  
of your imagination.

So what?  
Quoting from above:

"Attempts at detailed description of effective pronunciations (by a  
foreign ear, who hears what it was trained to...) are irrelevant."

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That was about the foreign ear of Mr. Scott (not Ross, sorry).

Either you read very poorly, or you don't know what a genuinely detailed description of a pronunciation would look like, since I offered none. I have no idea what you think you mean by 'effective' in this context. Finally, you have no idea how my ears have or have not been trained.

[...]

"but that is certainly not central, and /@/ does not represent anything in the source language. It still remains highly unreasonable to force your own concepts on another language, where there is no correspondence. "

I'm not forcing a damned thing on anyone; I'm simply reporting how that French vowel is normally represented in broad IPA transcription. (This includes standard French references like Petit Robert and <http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv4/showps.exe?p=combi.htm;java=no>.) If you're surprised, blame your ignorance, not the messenger.

The fact is that /@/ most definitely *does* represent something in standard French, even if that something usually isn't [ə]. And if you weren't more interested in playing the supercilious jackass than in understanding what you read, you might even have realized that I nowhere claimed that e muet is commonly pronounced [ə]; indeed, I explicitly denied this.

Now, if a certain Cécile and a Ms Smith chose to explain it in an English book in these highly inadequate terms it's their problem,

Ah, I see; you obviously know nothing about the book in question.

[...]

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