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Un néologisme pris sur le vif : *la bravitude*

- **Publication type:** Journal article
- **Journal:**
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- **Author:** Arrivé (Michel)
- **Abstract:** The french neologism *bravitude* is one of those whose first occurrence can be most precisely determined; it was first used by Ségolène Royal on 6th january 2007 during a visit to the Great Wall of China. The article first investigates the relations between this *bravitude* and its homonym previously used in an internet video game, and then tackles the following questions :
1. How can the creation of the neologism be explained? Why did ségolène royal opt to use the neological suffix *-itude* when she could have used not only *bravour* but also the less common *braverie* and *braveté*? this is likely to be subconscious morphological reasoning but none less real.
2. What can account for the large number of comments made on this neologism and the violently negative character of most of them? many critics use “neologism” as an equivalent of barbarism or faulty language usage, and the implications of this are considered. it would seem that language is often imagined as a closed inventory of changeless items.
3. The reception given to *bravitude* is contrasted to that which the neologisms *courtesse d'idées*, *fatitude* and *héritation*, made by male politicians. can the difference in reception be attributed to the gender of the speaker? finally, the possible effect of the neologism on the productivity of the suffix *-itude* is discussed.
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