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2009, n° 3

Neologica

Revue internationale de néologie



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Un néologisme pris sur le vif : *la bravitude*

- **Publication type:** Journal article
- **Journal:**
[Neologica](#)
[2009, n° 3](#)
[. Revue internationale de néologie](#)
- **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.Howcan the creation of the neologismbe 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 commentsmade on this neologismand 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.
- **Pages:** 67 to 77
- **Journal:** [Neologica](#)
- **CLIL theme:** 3147 -- SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES, LETTRES -- Lettres et Sciences du langage -- Linguistique, Sciences du langage
- **EAN:** 9782812442292
- **ISBN:** 978-2-8124-4229-2
- **ISSN:** 2262-0354
- **DOI:** [10.15122/isbn.978-2-8124-4229-2.p.0071](#)

- **Publisher:** Classiques Garnier
- **Online publication:** 04-15-2010
- **Periodicity:** Annual
- **Language:** French

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