

**A real time study with a social focus -  
the embedding of recent vowel changes in Parisian French**

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In 1969, Martinet announced a possible breakdown over time of the following oppositions in Parisian French phonology: /ɔ̃/-/a/ (*pâte-patte*), /e/-/ɛ/ (*piqué-piquait*), /ø/-/œ/ (*jeûne-jeune*), /o/-/ɔ/ (*saule-sole*), starting with the /A/-pair. Our real-time comparison of the reading of sentences with hidden minimal pairs by 12 informants from a 1972-74 Parisian corpus (Péretz-Juillard 1977) with 12 from a parallel 2001-2004 corpus (Hansen & Juillard) shows that the /A/-opposition is now threatened by total extinction: it was fully maintained in 20% of the tested pairs in the early data, but in none (0%) of the pairs in the recent data. This merging tendency seems to affect the other oppositions as well, the corresponding percentages being: /Ø/ 44%→17% ; /E/ 50%→27%; /O/ 71%→25%. Our preliminary analysis of the social dimension accompanying these changes indicates that there is no unambiguous social profile for them: Whereas the breakdown of the /A/-opposition seems to have been accelerated in the speech of the well-educated informants, the reverse is true for the /Ø/- and /O/-oppositions, mostly abandoned by the least formally educated; the /E/-opposition appears socially neutral. Further analysis of ordinary speech in the two data-sets will probably help us add to the picture of these changes in Parisian French.