

## Re: What's the different between /tS/ as one phoneme and as two?

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**From:** Miguel Carrasquer (*mcv\_at\_wxs.nl*)

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On 19 Jul 2004 16:17:03 -0700, tor826@yahoo.com (Tor) wrote:

>Nathan Sanders <nsanders.DIE.SPAM@wso.williams.edu> wrote in message  
news:<nsanders.DIE.SPAM-168936.12514319072004@news.verizon.net>...

>

>> Essentially, an English /b/ at the beginning of a word is acoustically  
>> similar to a French /p/ at the beginning of a word.

>

>If so, you'd expect French people to have a tendency to misinterpret  
>English words beginning with /b/. They'd often hear <bill> as <pill>,  
>for example. But I'm not aware of French people having this  
>difficulty.

>

>> There is no significant vocal cord vibration in English plosives at  
>> the beginning of a word.

>

>I don't quite agree. I think the voicing is a little reduced, but  
>still significant enough to play a role in distinguishing /p/ from  
>/b/.

It's not a question of agreeing or not, it's a question of looking at the spectrograms. There is no voicing at the onset of English voiced /b/. Voicing, or better said, VOT (Voice Onset Time) of course *\*does\** play a role in distinguishing /p/ from /b/. In the case of /b/, vocal chord vibrations begin at around the transition from /b/ to the following vowel. In the case of initial /p/, voicelessness is maintained well into the following vowel (this is perceived as aspiration: [h] is equivalent to any voiceless vowel).

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