

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

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**From:** Tor ([tor826\\_at\\_yahoo.com](mailto:tor826_at_yahoo.com))

**Date:** 07/21/04

Date: 20 Jul 2004 18:42:30 -0700

Miguel Carrasquer <[mcv@wxs.nl](mailto:mcv@wxs.nl)> wrote in message  
news:<8ippf0do416sq57hd6vu119peffbeumjvn@4ax.com>...

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

>

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

>

>

> =====

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

> *Miguel Carrasquer Vidal*

> *mcv@wxs.nl*

You are quite right. What I mean by "voicing" here is a VOT that is earlier than the VOT of French initial [p], [t], or [k], which I'm taking as the standard for a voiceless, unaspirated stop.

My first assertion is that the average VOT of English initial [b] is earlier than the average VOT of French initial [p], and that this difference and the difference in muscular tension are usually noticeable to both English and French speakers.

My second assertion is that the VOT of an English [b] is earlier enough relative to the VOT of a French [p] for this additional voicing to make a difference in distinguishing English /b/ from English /p/. Hence I would not call English /b/ a voiceless unaspirated stop as I would call French /p/.

When English speakers hear a French [p], they don't usually think it's in the range of English /b/. They usually notice that it's different from both English /b/ and English /p/, but they don't know what to do with it. Sometimes they assign it to English /b/ and sometimes they assign it to English /p/.

Tor