



Re: Substitutes for English /T/ and /D/

Why do French speakers from France use [s] and [z], while those from Quebec use [t] and [d]?

Not just the French but also the Spanish.

Even Germans.

I have often wondered why non-natives use [s] and [z] or [t] and [d] but many natives use [f] and [v]. [s] and [z] or [t] and [d] mark you as non-native but [f] and [v] might not.

Presumably because to their foreigners' ears, [T] and [f] or [d] and [v] sound too different. We foreigners don't substitute, we approximate. Likewise I hear foreigners approximate German ü (/y/) as /u/ or /yu/, where, from a German perspective, /i/ would be the more natural replacement.

I recommended /d/ several times as a better alternative to /z/ to Germans who couldn't do /D/, should I reconsider?

It depends on your objective. If you wish to sound native then consider using [f] and [v] but an argument against is that these dialects are not very prestigious. To conform to them you may need to also drop [h]. I don't know if all dialects which replace [T] with [f] also drop [h] but the ones that I am familiar with do. If you can't do [T] and don't want to substitute [f] then I would also recommend [t], ditto [D] to [d]. Some Irish do that. (Hard to know which brackets I should be using here.)

The reason for choosing [f v] is that they are acoustically almost indistinguishable from [T D]. As for non-prestigious dialect, if the hearer hears the difference, that non-prestigiousness holds for only a very small and localized audience.

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