Janine Berns

Friction between phonetics and phonology

The status of affricates

Affricates, which we find for instance at the beginning of English *chip*, constitute one of the mysteries of phonological science. Linguists have been quarrelling for quite some time how this articulatory complex sound, consisting of a plosive released into a fricative, has to be described phonologically. That is, do languages, or rather speakers of a language, treat these units as a kind of plosive or as a balanced plosive-fricative combination?

This thesis presents an overview of the different analyses put forward in the history of phonological theory, and aims to break the current deadlock by addressing data from complementary sources; ranging from a genetically-balanced sample of the world's languages to diachronic and synchronic French. It is shown that affricates are not as complex as we had once thought.

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