

International and Danish practice in the phonetic notation of stops consonants

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The conventions for Danish phonetic notation have been intensely debated in the past years, and a particularly controversial aspect of this debate deals with the notation of Danish stop consonants. The controversy is not rooted in actual disagreement about how the Danish stops are pronounced but rather about which aspects of their articulation it is most important to represent in phonetic notation, and as such, which purpose phonetic notation should serve. This paper discusses and evaluates the various suggestions, with a focus on disagreements in the debate and with a grounding in the experimental phonetic research and international practice in the area. A general overview is given of how stop consonants are written using the international phonetic alphabet (IPA) in the languages of the world. The paper shows that the common Danish notation convention using the symbols [b̥ d̥ ɡ̊ pʰ tˢ kʰ] is unusual with respect to international usage of the IPA, and the paper argues that the convention is in some regards impractical, since there is no clear international consensus regarding the interpretation of several of the symbols. The paper further argues against the International Phonetic Association being authoritative on the matter of phonological analysis, and as such, also on the matter of phonemic notation using slant brackets / /.

KEYWORDS: phonetic notation; phonemic notation; phonological contrast; stop consonants; affricates