

# Danish stop consonants: perception, voicing, fortis-lenis and transcription

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The central theme in the recent debate in *Nydanske Sprogstudier* and *Danske Studier* about the transcription of Danish can be narrowed down to whether and to what extent the choice of phonetic symbols could and should comply with the principles of *The Handbook of the International Phonetic Association*. The debate is supplemented here with a closer look at three pertinent topics. (i) Danish (b d g) are inherently voiceless, but do not sound like (p t k) in other languages. (ii) The absence of voicing can be made explicit with a diacritic, [̥], i.e. [b̥ d̥ g̥], since it is not restricted to *devoicing* by the phonetic context but employed also for inherently *unvoiced* sounds. (iii) Research internationally shows that articulatory strength has articulatory and acoustic correlates that seem to invariably accompany voicing differences in obstruents, but not vice-versa – since differences in fortis-lenis may exist without accompanying voicing differences. The implication is that [p t k] in the IPA *de facto* identifies not only voiceless, but also fortis consonants. Together with the auditory difference it makes /p t k/ and [p t k] unsuitable as representations of the initial stops in e.g. *bille*, *dille*, *gilde* 'beetle, craze, party.'

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