The onset voicing effect: evidence from Dutch labiodental fricatives

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In a wide variety of languages, it has been reported that vowel F0 at the onset tends to be lower after voiced than after voiceless consonants (e.g., Hombert et al., 1979). This phenomenon has been called *onset voicing effect* (OVE) by Kirby & Ladd (2015).

This paper investigates the presence of the OVE in Dutch initial labiodental fricatives. Previous studies have shown that Dutch initial fricatives are currently devoicing (e.g., Kissine et al., 2003; Pinget, 2015). We thus examine whether the OVE is maintained in the case of devoicing. The maintenance of the OVE in the case of devoicing would provide evidence for incipient *tonogenesis*, whereas the disappearance of the OVE would indicate that initial labiodental fricatives develop as a *full merger*.

Results show clear regional differences in the OVE that corresponds to the regional differences in fricative devoicing. The devoicing process seems thus to trigger a reduction of the OVE, but not (yet) its full disappearance. We argue that these results are in line with the full merger hypothesis.

Literatuur


