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Two main proposals of affricates persist today. The disparity between the two lies in which features they assign to affricates. The first, stemming from Chomsky and Halle (1968) and revised in various ways by Sagey (1986), Lombardi (1990), and Steriade (1993), states that the affricate is part stop and part fricative, associating it with both [+continuant] and [-continuant], or some variation thereof. The second, that an affricate is a [+strident] stop, stems from Jakobson, Fant, and Halle (1976) and has been defended by LaCharité (1993), Rubach (1994), and Clements (1999) by phonological and typological data. There is little phonetic backing on either side. Voicing patterns may be the key to the classification of affricates. This paper compares the voicing patterns of affricates to those of fricatives and stops. Fricatives are fully voiced word-initially and word-medially (Pirello 1997), but usually partially devoiced word-finally. Stops, on the other hand, are fully voiced only word-medially¹ (Lisker 1964), and initially and finally are partially voiced or tenuis. An investigation of affricate voicing in medial or final positions would not be revealing, since both stops and fricatives behave similarly in these contexts. However, word-initially a fricative is fully voiced² and a stop is not, thus the two theories would make very different predictions about the behaviour of an affricate in this position. The part stop part fricative theory would predict that the affricate should be fully voiced, whereas the strident stop theory would predict that the affricate should be only partially voiced, or maybe simply tenuis. This data supports the latter; the affricate is not fully voiced in word-initial position thus patterning with stops and supporting the strident stop view of the affricate.

¹ Here, word-medially could also refer to a phrase-medial position if that position is intervocalic.

² When stops are not fully-voiced word-initially, it is when the leading edge is devoiced, which I will discuss later in the paper.

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