NOTES ON PHUKET THAI

by

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The aim of this brief note is to furnish data on the Phuket dialect on a few selected topics that are of special interest to Tai historical-comparativists. The statements made herein are based primarily on a formal investigation of the speech of six speakers of Phuket Thai. All six informants were male college students, attending Phuket Teacher Training College; their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-four.

For the benefit of the Tai historical-comparativists, examples will be given in reference to the following Proto-Tai diagram (Gedney 1973).

PROTO-TAI TONES

Initials at time of tonal splits		A	B	C	D Short	D Long
	Voiceless friction sounds, *s, hm, ph, etc.	1	5	9	13	17
	Voiceless unaspirated stops, *p, etc.	2	6	10	14	18
	Glottal, *ʔ, ʔb, etc.	3	7	11	15	19
	Voiced, *b, m, l, z, etc.	4	8	11	16	20

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Throughout the paper, I will provide for each example its Standard Thai orthographic representation, its Proto-Tai classification (by tonal category and initial consonant; A2, B8, C9, etc.), and broad phonetic transcription of its consonants and vowels, and its tonal contour [consult section (a)].

(a) Tonal inventory

Phuket Thai has six contrastive tones on nonstopped syllables: high falling, mid-rising falling, low falling, rising, mid-high level and low level. This auditory description is in essential agreement with Brown (1965) and Egerod (1972). For a phonological description of the tones in terms of distinctive features, see Piyatham (1970) and Gandour (1977a).

In terms of our Proto-Tai diagram, the distribution of tones in the Phuket dialect, on stopped as well as nonstopped syllables, is as follows:

On nonstopped syllables	high falling	A1, B5
	mid-rising falling	A2-3, B6-7
	low falling	A4
	rising	B8
	mid-high level	C9-11
	low level	C12
On stopped syllables	high	DS13
	mid-rising	DS14-15
	low	DS16
	mid-high level	DL17-19
	rising	DL20

Of interest is the merger of tones across Proto-Tai tonal categories, under A1, B5 and A2-3, B6-7. A similar merger of tones under the A and B tonal categories of Proto-Tai in the Trang dialect (Egerod 1961) has apparently been compensated for by a distinction in vowel quality. Haudricourt (1961), indeed, cites the Trang data as an instance of "rephonologization" whereby a phonemic contrast of one kind phoneti-

cally is replaced by a phonemic contrast of another kind phonetically. Despite the loss of distinction in tone under A1, B5 and A2-3, B6-7 in the Phuket dialect, no rephonologization has taken place.

(b) Final glottal stop

All vowels in the Phuket dialect under the DS and DL tonal categories occur long before a final glottal stop. The surface phonetic sequence of long vowel-glottal stop historically results from two sound changes from Proto-Tai. The one involves a change of final /k/ to /ʔ/ after long vowels. Brown (1965) reports that this change has also occurred in other Southern Thai dialects including Ko Samui, Chaiya, Takua Pa, Ranong and Chumphon; Sarawit (1973:66) reports the same change in the White Tai and Black Tai dialects of Li's (1960) Southwestern group. The other involves a change of short vowels to long before a final glottal stop. Egerod (1961) reports the same change for the Surat Thani and Ko Samui dialects. For the Trang and Phatthalung dialects, however, Egerod (1961:69) indicates that the final glottal stop is sometimes dropped after these lengthened vowels. This subsequent loss of the final glottal stop presumably represents the final stage of this historical sound change.

Examples of words in which final /k/ changed to a glottal stop after a long vowel:

DL17	ฉาก	'to chip off'	[tʰaaʔ]
	ฉีก	'to tear off'	[tʃʰiiʔ]
	ชูก	'correct'	[tʰuuʔ]
	แขก	'guest'	[kʰææʔ]
DL18	ตาก	'to expose'	[taaʔ]
	ปีก	'wing'	[piiʔ]
	แตก	'to break'	[tææʔ]
DL19	ออก	'to leave'	[ʔɔɔʔ]
	บอก	'to tell'	[bɔɔʔ]
DL20	โลก	'world'	[looʔ]
	มาก	'much'	[maaʔ]
	แลก	'to exchange'	[lææʔ]

Examples of words in which short vowels changed to long before a final glottal stop:

DS13	เหาะ	'to fly'	[hɔɔ?]
	แฉะ	'damp'	[tʃʰææ?]
	เหมาะ	'suitable'	[mɔɔ?]
DS14	เตะ	'to kick'	[tee?]
	เกาะ	'island'	[kɔɔ?]
	ปะ	'to mend'	[paa?]
DS15	ดุ	'fierce'	[duu?]
DS16	แวะ	'to visit'	[wææ?]
	แพะ	'goat'	[pʰææ?]
	พระ	'priest'	[pʰaa?]
	เคาะ	'to knock'	[kʰɔɔ?]

Note that these DS words with lengthened vowels are pronounced with the tones of their DL counterparts. Thus, DS16 แวะ for example, is pronounced with a rising tone along with the original DS20 words.

(c) Short 'mid' vowels /e, o/

For a number of Southern Thai dialects, short 'mid' vowels /e, o/ of Standard Thai have been reported to correspond to /æ, ɔ/ (Egerod 1961, Brown 1965, Jones 1965, จิตต์ธรรม 1970, พิเศษสกลกิจ 1973). For the Phuket dialect, my data show that /e/ surfaces phonetically as [æ^] before labial and velar places of articulation, [ɛ-] before an alveolar place of articulation; and similarly, for /o/, it is phonetically realized as [ɔ^] before labials and velars, [ɤ] before alveolars. The centralization of these vowels before alveolars is an instance of anticipatory coarticulation; the target position for an alveolar consonant, unlike its labial and velar counterparts, requires that the body of the tongue be raised toward the roof of the mouth, thus effecting this audible change in vowel quality.

This allophonic distribution may be illustrated with the following set of words:

DS15	อก	'chest'	[ʔɔk]
	อบ	'to bake'	[ʔɔp]
	อด	'to starve'	[ʔɤt]
	เด็ก	'child'	[dæk]
	เจ็บ	'hurt'	[tʃæp]
DS14	เด็ด	'resolute'	[dɛt]

It is not restricted, however, to DS words only: B7 บ่ง 'to show' [bɔŋ], B7 บ่ม 'to age (wine, wood)' [bɔm], B7' 'to complain' [bɣn], A4 นม 'breast' [nɔm], A4 มน 'round' [mɣn]. These short mid vowels /e, o/ on B8 words lengthen to [æ æ] and [ɔɔ], respectively [see section (d)].

(d) Distribution of long and short vowels

Vowel length is, to a large extent, tonally conditioned in Phuket Thai. Restricting our attention to tonal categories A, B and C, we find that only long vowels occur under B8, C; both short and long vowels occur under A, B5-7. The neutralization of the vowel length distinction under B8, C historically results from the lengthening of the short vowels. It is not coincidental that the tonal contours in B8, C may all be characterized as "nonfalling", in opposition to the "falling" tonal contours in A, B5-7. In Gandour (1977b), I offer an articulatory explanation to account for this interaction between tone and vowel length.

Examples of words that are pronounced with long vowels:

B8	ยุ่ง	'confused'	[yuuŋ]
	ชื่อ	'name'	[tʃʰɯɯ]
	ร่ม	'shade'	[lɔɔm]
C9	ให้	'to give'	[haay]
	หิ้ว	'to carry'	[hiiw]
C10	กุ้ง	'shrimp'	[kuuŋ]
	ปิ้ง	'to roast'	[piiŋ]
	ต้ม	'to boil'	[tɔɔm]
C11	อุ้ม	'to hold'	[ʔuum]
C12	อิ่ม	'to smile'	[yiim]

It is important to point out that only short vowels under Proto-Tai category B8 become long. Egerod's (1961:69) and Brown's (1965:65) statements about tone and vowel length in Southern Thai dialects simply do not obtain for the Phuket dialect.

(e) Tone "sandhi"

Phuket Thai has a tone rule which neutralizes the distinction between the rising and low-level tones in nonphrase final position at normal speech tempo. In this environment, the rising tone flattens out to low level, losing its rising end component. In the following sentence, for example,

pen^{A2} *phii*^{B8} saaw^{A1} '(She's) my older sister'

the underlined citation form surfaces phonetically in normal speech as a low-level tone, with concomitant shortening of the vowel. The reality of this rule is amply demonstrated in tonal errors made by Phuket bidialectals when attempting to speak Standard Thai (Gandour 1977a). No loss of contrast is observed between the other tones in connected speech.

(f) Disyllabic words: first-syllable deletion

It has been observed that speakers of Southern Thai dialects tend to drop the first syllable of certain disyllabic words (Egerod 1961, Brown 1965). An extensive analysis of disyllabic words in the Phuket

dialect further indicates that nearly all disyllabic words of non-Indic origin (see Gedney 1947) lose their first syllables; most disyllabic words of Indic origin, especially learned words, retain them.

Examples of disyllabic words that are pronounced without their first syllables in both citation and combination forms:

A1	ถนน	'road'	[n ɤn]
A3	สะบาย	'comfortable'	[baay]
A4	สะเมอ	'to talk in one's sleep'	[məə]
B5	ระหว่าง	'between'	[waaŋ]
B6	กระต่าย	'rabbit'	[taay]
B8	มะมวง	'guava'	[muaŋ]
C10	ตะกร้อ	'rattan ball'	[kɔɔ]
C11	สะดุ้ง	'startled'	[duuŋ]
C12	มะพร้าว	'coconut'	[phaaw]
DS13	สะนุก	'funny'	[nuk]
DS15	สะดุด	'to stumble'	[dut]
DS16	ทะลุ	'to pierce through'	[luu?]
DL19	กระดูก	'bone'	[duu?]

Several disyllabic nouns can be found that retain the first syllable in their citation forms, but lose it in combination with other nouns. For example, DS16 มะลิ 'jasmine', pronounced [məlii?] in its citation form, loses its first syllable when combined with ดอก, 'blossom', yielding (dɔɔʔlii?] 'jasmine blossom'.

Disyllabic words that retain the first syllable in both citation and combination forms are mostly words of Indic origin. For example: กุหลาบ 'rose', ฉลาด 'intelligent', สภาพ 'condition', ประเสริฐ 'excellent', สติ 'consciousness'.

(g) 'Diphthongization' of long high vowels

In open syllables under Proto-Tai categories A, B5-7, long high vowels /ii, ɯɯ, uu/ in Phuket Thai are phonetically realized as [ei, ɤɯ, ou], respectively. The co-occurrence restrictions on these diphthongal forms are of a tonal nature: the diphthongal forms occur on "falling" tones only [see section (a)].

Although tonal conditioning factors have been suggested in earlier investigations of Phuket Thai (cf. Egerod 1961, Brown 1965, Piyatham 1970, Henderson 1975) none of these earlier studies specify the conditioning environment as given here. Tonal conditioning factors may also be responsible, at least in part, for a similar diphthongization of long high vowels that has been observed in the Lung Ming dialect of Kwangsi Province, China (Gedney 1972).

Examples of words containing diphthongal forms of long high vowels:

A1	หมี	'bear'	[mei]
	ถือ	'to believe'	[t^həɯ]
	หู	'ear'	[hou]
A2	ตี	'to hit"	[tei]
A3	ดี	'good'	[dei]
A4	โหล่	'hole'	[lou]
B5	ขี่	'to ride'	[k^hei]
	ขู่	'to threaten'	[k^hou]
B7	อู่	'garage'	[ʔou]

Some intradialectal variation in the pronunciation of the diphthongs associated with /ii, ɯɯ/ was evident in the speech of my informants. Two of them completely neutralized the distinction between [ɣɯ] and [ei], in favor of the latter diphthong, yielding homophonous pairs like มี 'to have' and มือ 'hand'. This diphthongal neutralization also seemed to hold for some of the older people in the province that I had occasion to observe informally. Still others maintained the distinction between these diphthongs, but changed the ending point of the diphthongal movement. Instead of [ɣɯ] these Phuket speakers produced [ɣi], yielding a phonetic contrast between [ei] (e.g. มี) and [ɣi] (e.g. มือ). A more precise sociolinguistic statement will have to await further investigation.

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