

This thesis studies tones of the Thai dialect spoken in various districts of Amphoe Muang Nakhon Pathom. Both the tone system and the phonetic characteristics of each tone are analyzed and the results are used to determine sub-dialect areas. Data were collected from 23 informants, who were chosen according to a set of criteria, to represent 23 districts. They include monosyllabic words and minimal pairs. All of the data were analyzed auditorily and some were analyzed instrumentally using the DSP Sona-Graph Model 5500. The results of instrumental analysis were used to verify those of auditory analysis.

All of the varieties under study have five tones : mid-level, upper-mid-falling, upper-mid-level-falling, mid-rising and low-level-rising. The phonetic characteristics of every tone vary from one area to another. Such variation can be used to divide the area under study into many sub-dialect areas. Three criteria, all of which concern occurrence of tonetic variants, were used in the division : first, the most frequent occurrence; second, co-occurrence, and third, occurrence and non-occurrence. Each criterion was applied to the data of each tone in each syllable type (i.e. live syllable, dead syllable with long vowel, and dead syllable with short vowel) where applicable. The results are shown on maps. Finally all of the results according to each criterion are compiled together yielding 7 types of possible results. It is found that there are between 13 and 23 sub-dialects depending on the criterion used.