

## A SKETCH OF A DIALECT OF MAE SOT

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The dialect described here is that of the village of Phawo [phawɔ], which is located about half way between the towns of Tak and Mae Sot. The informant was Yupha Yomlamphu, a third year student at the College of Education, Sinakharinwirot University, Pitsanulok.

The Mae Sot dialect belongs to the Northern Thai dialects of Thailand. That is, while Central dialects have made a two way tonal split in syllables which presumably had Proto-Tai tone one (those spelled without a tone marker in written Thai) on the basis of High initials versus Mid and Low initials, the Northern dialects have made a two way tonal split on the basis of High plus Mid initials that were glottal.

This dialect is mutually intelligible with other Northern dialects. The intelligibility distance between Mae Sot and Central Thai is, as with other Northern dialects, relative to the period of exposure. For example, a Central Thai speaker who had never heard a Northern Thai dialect would comprehend little of a Northern Thai conversation on first exposure. However, given a few weeks the Central Thai speaker would be able to understand the theme of a conversation in the Mae Sot dialect.

The tones of this Mae Sot dialect are similar to those Brown indicates for Phrae, Nan and Chiangmai (Brown 1965:80,82). The reflexes of proto tones A, B and DL are similar to those of Phrae and Nan as recorded by Brown; the reflexes of proto tones C and DS similar to those of Chiangmai as recorded by Brown.

## PROTO-TONES

## Proto-Initials

## Proto Tones

		A	B	C	D Short Vowel	D Long Vowel
High	voiceless and unaspirated, eg. *ph, *ŋ, etc.					
Mid	unaspirated voiceless stops, eg. *p, *t, etc.					
	? and pre-glottalised, eg. *ʔ, *ʔb, *ʔy					
Low	voiced, eg. *b, *z					

There are six tonal distinctions on smooth syllables:

- tone 1 rising tone (slightly lower than Standard Thai)
- tone 2 mid tone with a rise at the end
- tone 3 level tone (higher than Standard Thai low tone)
- tone 4 falling tone with glottal constriction (similar to Standard Thai)
- tone 5 high tone with a very slight rise and fall at the end and final glottal constriction
- tone 6 high rising tone with final glottal constriction

On checked syllables with a short vowel there are two tones: high and a higher high which we may identify with tones 5 and 6.

On checked syllables with a long vowel there are two tones: low mid and a falling high which we may identify with tones 3 and 4.

Examples of the six tones are as follows:

## Proto-Initials

## Proto-Tones

		A	B	C	DS	DL
High	voiceless aspirated	khaa 1 'leg'	khay 3 'egg'	haa 5 'five'	suk 5 'ripe'	niak 3 'gums'
Mid	voiceless unaspirated stops	taa 1 'eye'	kay 3 'chicken'	tom 5 'to boil'	tap 5 'liver'	peet 3 'eight'
	? and pre-glottalised	bin 2 'fly'	baaw 3 'young man'	baan 5 'vil-lage'	dip 'raw'	baat 3 'wound'
Low	voiced	maa 2 'to come'	poo 4 'father'	maay 6 'wood'	mat 6 'to tie'	nook 4 'out-side'

For the following forms the tone differs from the Standard Thai correspondence:

puu 4 '*person*' - The tone and initial point to a proto B4 tone. While Standard Thai indicates a voiceless aspirated initial, High Class initial, with C1 tone, the Northern Tai group (Li 1960) indicates a C4 tone and some Northern Thai dialects such as Shan of Chiangrai in Thailand indicate a B4 tone (Brown 1965:154).

(ta) paat 4 '*frog*' - The proto initial indicates a DL2 tone, Mae Sot tone 3.

(sa) phay 3 '*sister-in-law*' - The proto initial indicates a C4 tone, Mae Sot tone 6.

ken 1 '*hard core*' - The proto initial indicates tone B2, Mae Sot tone 3.

kuu 2 '*I*' - The proto initial indicates tone A2, Mae Sot tone 1.

pay 2 '*go*' - The proto initial indicates tone A2, Mae Sot tone 1.

The last two forms '*I*' and '*go*' may be borrowings from Standard Thai because of the frequency of the use of these two forms. The Mae Sot tone 2 is similar to the Standard Thai tone A2.

kii 3, khii 5 '*how many*' - The form kii 3 corresponds to the Standard Thai form kii2, proto tone B2. The word is of Chinese origin and other Thai dialects often have one or more forms with different tonal correspondences. kiŋ 3 '*half*' - Here the initial and tone are irregular. The proto form indicates a \*gr initial with tone B4. The Mae Sot correspondence for \*gr is kh as seen in \*graan A4 '*to moan*', Mae Sot khaan 2. The Mae Sot form points rather to a B2 tone as do some other Northern Thai dialects in Thailand, such as Shan of Chiangrai (Brown 1965:151).

As regards vowels, the Mae Sot dialect has the same system as Standard Thai with one exception. The central diphthong ɨa is in the process of simplifying to the palatal diphthong ia.

Examples of the vowels are as follows:

i ii	ɨ ɨɨ	u uu
e ee	ə əə	o oo
ɛ ɛɛ	a aa	ɔ ɔɔ
	ia	ɨa    ua

ʔim 3 '*full*'

pii 1 '*year*'

nɨŋ 3 '*one*'

hɨɨ 5 '*to give*'

kuŋ 5 '*shrimp*'

huu 1 '*ear*'

phet 5 'spicy'  
 ɲən 2 'silver'  
 tæm 1 'to add'  
 ʔok 5 'chest'  
 poot 3 'pleased'  
 kən 1 'core'  
 mɛɛ 4 'mother'  
 tap 5 'liver'  
 taa 1 'eye'  
 ʔɔy 5 'sugar-cane'  
 pɔɔ 4 'father'  
 mia 2 'wife'  
 dʔan 2 'month'  
 khʔa 2 or khia 2 'vine'  
 suan 1 'garden'

For many forms the change of *ɨa* to *ia* has taken place and apparently the form has been restructured with *ia* as the vowel. In such cases alternate forms with *ɨa* are not acceptable to the speaker; for example, while she gave *liak* 3 for 'choose', she would only accept *liat* 3 for 'blood'.

The following forms differ from Standard Thai:

*toŋ* 4 'field', Standard Thai *thuŋ* 3 - Other dialects indicate a proto reconstruction of *\*doŋ* B4.

*saap* 3 or *seep* 3 'cockroach'.

*tæm* 1 or *tiam* 1 'to add' - This word is of Chinese origin and shows irregular correspondences in many dialects. Brown's Phrae dialect has *ia* (Brown 1965:152).

*fiaŋ* 2 'straw', Standard Thai *faaŋ* 1 - Other Tai dialects have *ɨa* as the vocalic nucleus as in, for example, Yay *fiaŋ* 4 (Gedney 1965).

*hiɨ* 5 'to give', Standard Thai *hay* 3 - Other dialects indicate a proto reconstruction of *\*hay* C1.

*lew* 1 'soft, liquid', Standard Thai *leew* 5 - The reconstructed form for the Southwestern group is *\*leew* A1. Indeed, the long *ee* and short *e* as well as *oo* and *ɔ* are not reconstructed for the Proto-Southwestern Tai vowel system (Sarawit 1973:97). There is only a two way *e* *ɛɛ* / *o* *ɔɔ* distinction. The Mae Sot as well as the Standard Thai forms are irregular.

The system of finals is like that of Standard Thai: