

A SKETCH OF A DIALECT OF MAE SOT

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The dialect described here is that of the village of Phawo [phawo], 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 unspirated, 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 'guns'
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'	paaw 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'
 təəm 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'.

təəm 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).

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

hʔi 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 *ʔeew 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:

-m	hoom 1	'fragrant'
-n	waan 1	'sweet'
-ŋ	suuŋ 1	'tall'
-p	?aap 3	'to bathe'
-t	mat 5	'flea'
-k	suk 5	'ripe'
-w	baw 2	'light'
-y	bay 2	'leaf'

The following finals differ from Standard Thai:

noo 2 'ox hump' Standard Thai nook 2.

dīay 2 and dia 2 'cockspur' Standard Thai dīay 1.

(ta)waa 2 'yesterday' Standard Thai waan 2 - Here other dialects confirm the Mae Sot final with the Standard Thai final most likely assimilated from the form nii 4 as in waa B1 nii C4.

phuuk 4 'tomorrow' Standard Thai phrun 3 nii 4 - Here other dialects indicate that the proto form had a velar stop final and that the Standard Thai nasal is a result of feature assimilation from the dental nasal initial nii 4.

wan 2 hīi 2 'day after tomorrow', Standard Thai (ma) riin 1 - The Standard Thai final again being the result of assimilation as in *rīi-4 nii C4.

The system of initial consonants is the same as Standard Thai with the following exceptions:

Standard Thai	Mae Sot	Example
ch	ch	chiik 3 'to tear'
	c	caaw 6 'early morning'
ph	ph	phīŋ 5 'bee'
	p	poō 4 'father'
th	th	thuŋ 1 'bag'
	t	toōŋ 6 'stomach'
kh	kh	*x khaa 3 'root'
		*kh khom 1 'bitter'
		*y khōon 6 'hammer'
	k	*kaaŋ 2 'chin'

The unaspirated stops are reflexes of Proto-Tai voiced stops as opposed to the aspirates which are reflexes of the voiceless aspirated stops and in the case of kh the reflex of the voiced and voiceless velar fricatives as well.

kh1	k	kaan 2 'crawl'
khṛ	kh	khaaŋ 2 'to moan'
kl	k	kaaŋ 1 'middle'
kr	k, kh	kon 1, khon 1 'to snore'
r	h	huan 2 'ear of rice'
pr	p	peeŋ 2 'bush'
pḷ	p	paa 1 'fish'
phr	ph	phaak 4 'to separate'
phl	ph	phaat 4 'fall down'
y	y	*ʔy yuu 3 'to be'
	ñ	*ñ ñuŋ 2 'mosquito'
		*ñ ñuŋ 5 'confused'
		*y ñaan 2 'slack'

The following are exceptions to the Mae Sot initial correspondences:

Standard Thai ch

*j̄ chaa 2 'tea'

*j̄ chaay 2 'eaves'

Standard Thai f

*f Standard Thai faaŋ 3 'millet' Mae Sot paaŋ 5

The Central dialects indicate a ph initial and Saek shows a vowel diphthong ia,

vian 3 (Gedney 1970, 1970m).

Standard Thai kh

*ɣ khon 2 'person' - While the Southwestern group points to a proto *g which would correspond to k in Mae Sot, the Northern group indicates a proto *ɣ for which the Mae Sot initial kh is the correct correspondence.

*kh kon 4 'thick'

*g khaaŋ 1 'ape'

Standard Thai kl

*kl kliip 3 'petal'

Standard Thai khṛ

*gr kiŋ 3 'half'

Standard Thai kh1

*ɣ1 khoon 2 'to wobble'

Standard Thai l

*l hop 6 'to erase' - The initial is as if the form had a proto *r.

Standard Thai liim 1 'to open the eyes' Mae Sot miin 2 - Here the Mae Sot form agrees with other dialects and the reconstructed proto form *miin A4.

Standard Thai ph

- *b phaŋ 2 'to collapse'
 phak 6 'to rest'

Standard Thai pl

- *pl pliaŋ 2 'naked'

Standard Thai phl

- *bl puu 2 'betel nut'

Standard Thai phr

- *br (ba) paaw 6 'coconut'

Standard Thai r

- *r lii 2 'long'
 looy 6 '100'
 leek 4 'first'

Standard Thai s

- *s khwaay 1 'late in the morning' - Other dialects also reflect a velar cluster as in Lü khw-, and Yay kw- (Gedney 1965,1970m).

Standard Thai th

- *d thaŋ 6 'all'
 thoŋ 2 'gold'
 thay 2 'Thai'
 (ka) thi:p 4 'to stomp'

Standard Thai y

- Standard Thai day 3 yin 1 'to hear' Mae Sot day 5 ɣin 2 - Shan shows both initials y and ŋ (Gedney 1970m).

*ŋ y+a 3 'bait'

- yiaw 3 'hawk' - This form shows initial irregular correspondences in other dialects; for example, the Northern Group points to a reconstructed *giw B4 and Thai also has a form hiaw 2 as well as yiaw 2. *ñ y+i:t 4 'to stretch' - Lao shows two forms y+i:t 5 as well as the usual *ñ correspondence as in ñ+i:t 5 (Gedney 1970m).

Turning now to vocabulary differences between Standard Thai and the Mae Sot dialect, it should be noted that, in some cases, the word the Mae Sot speaker uses exists in Standard Thai but with a different referent. In other cases the word used does not exist in Standard Thai. In listing the vocabulary differences the Standard Thai lexical item which was used to elicit dialect forms from the informant is given first. Second is the Mae Sot form; and third a Standard Thai form (when one exists) is given which corresponds phonologically to the dialect form.

The word list used in this study is a list of approximately 1200 cognates which is used in doing historical reconstruction in the Tai languages. The list thus does not aim at exhaustiveness but rather is useful in showing development of the dialect being examined from Proto-Tai.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mae Sot</i>	<i>Standard Thai</i>
baa 2 'shoulder'	lay 3	lay 2 'shoulder'
(ca) muuk 2 'nose'	huu 3 dan 3	—
chiaw 3 'swift water'	paa 3	nam 4 paa 2 'flood'
daay 1 'to weed'	thaag 1	thaag 1 'to weed'
dek 2 'child'	(la) ?oon 3	?oon 2 'soft, young'
duay 3 'with'	tuay 3	—
duu 1 'to see'	phoo 3	—
fan 1 'tooth'	khiaw 5	khiaw 3 'tooth'
hua 1 roo 4 'laugh'	khay 5 hua 1	—
kee 2 'old'	thaw 6	thaw 4 'old'
khaat 2 'torn'	put 5	—
kheep 3 'narrow'	kiit 3	—
khray 1 'who'	phay 1	—
kham 3 'night'	leeg 2	obsolete mi+ 1 leeg 1
khaw 1 'he, she, they'	pin 4	—
kat 2 'to bite'	khop 5	khop 2 'to bite'
khrua 1 'kitchen'	hian 2 taw 2 fay 2	rian 1 'house', taw 1 'stove', fay 1 'fire'
khray 3 'to want'	yaak 3	yaak 2 'to want'
khwaan 1 'axe'	khwaan 1 or muy 2	—
luam 1 'loose'	lom 3	—
laay 1 'many'	nak 6	nak 4 intensifier
lom 1 'fall down'	taaw 2	—
len 3 'to run'	wig 4	wig 3 'to run'
laag 3 'below'	lum 4	—
lap 4 'to sharpen'	fon 1	fon 1 'to sharpen'
mi+ 4 'meal'	khaap 4	—
maay 3 'widow'	mia 2 haag 6	mia 1 raag 4 'widow'
mi+ 3 'dark'	kham 4	kham 3 'dark'
may 3 negative	boo 3 or baa 3	—
naa 6 'mother's younger sibling'	?aa 2	?aa 1 'father's younger sibling'
puu 2 'maternal grand- father'	puu 4 luag 1	phoo 3 'father', luag 1 'big'
taa 1 'paternal grand- father'	puu 4 luag 1	phoo 3 'father', luag 1 'big'
yaay 1 'maternal grand- mother'	mee 4 luag 1	mee 3 'mother', luag 1 'big'

yaa 3 'paternal grand- mother'	mɛɛ 4 luaŋ 1	mɛɛ 3 'mother', luaŋ 1 'big'
(As can be seen from the immediately preceding forms, there is no distinction in this Mae Sot dialect between the paternal and maternal relations.)		
naal 'rice field'	toŋ 4	tuoŋ 3 'field'
nim 3 'soft'	nuam 4	—
nɪa 4 'meat'	cin 6	chin 4 'piece of'
nɪay 2 'tired'	?it 5	—
naan 1 'long time'	mɪfn 2	—
num 2 'young (man)'	baaw 3	baaw 2 'young man'
pee 4 'lose'	kan 5	—
(cha) na? 4 'win'	pee 6	pee 4 'lose'
ruŋ 3 'daybreak'	mɛɛ 4 caaw 6	mɛɛ 3 'mother', chaaw 4 'morning'
ram 1 'bran'	keep 3	kleep 2 'chaff'
rew 1 'quick'	wɔy 2	—
sɪa 2 'mat'	sɪa 3 or saat 3	sɪa 2 saat 2 'mat'
sak 2 khrəŋ 4 nɪŋ 2 'at least once', 'once'	hem 1 tia 4 nɪŋ 3	—
yip 2 'pick up'	ñam 4	yam 3 'to step on'

This paper, though brief, has pointed out some of the differences between Standard Thai and the Mae Sot dialect. While it is generally known that Northern and Northeastern dialects use a form such as *bɔɔ B3 for the negative as opposed to the Standard Thai may 3, the author hopes that by studying many dialects and vocabulary differences it may be possible to draw a word atlas for Thailand.

