

Abstract

The chief objective of this dissertation is the description of tone realization differences in Hanoian and Saigonese dialects based on a representative sample of recorded material, with special focus on read monologue and semi-spontaneous conversational speech. The research discusses mainly issues of tone production but it is complemented by a section on tone perception in form of a perception test.

The theoretical background in Section 2.1. describes the topic of tonality and tonal languages in general. Section 2.2. is devoted to the description of the Vietnamese language and attention is specifically paid to tonal inventories of both researched dialects. Tonogenesis is mentioned on a general level as well as in the Vietnamese language in particular.

Chapter 3 introduces the research methodology, namely the speaker selection, speech material preparation and recording, data extraction and preparation for the analyses and the perception test.

Chapter 4 is divided into three sections. Section 4.1. speaks about tone realizations in isolation and carefully preselected context. Its goal is to investigate the behaviour of tonal contours influenced by as few variables as possible. The results should be comparable to the findings of previously conducted studies. Section 4.2. strives to assess data from a quantitative point of view and yield data closely reflecting linguistic reality. Section 4.3. constitutes a perception test the purpose of which is to investigate the ability of tone distinction across the dialects when the tones are stripped of all contextual cues.

The results of the analyses indicate substantial differences in tonal contours between the Hanoian and Saigonese dialects. They also suggest that F_0 is the sole discrimination cue neither for Hanoian nor Saigonese tones. Voice quality, duration and, based on the findings of 4.2., especially context are phenomena influencing tone discrimination to a great extent. In connected speech possibly even more than the contour of F_0 . The perception test revealed a surprisingly low success rate of tone discrimination for both dialects.

Keywords: Vietnamese, tones, intonation, phonetics, tone production, tone perception