Exploring Phonetic Properties of Northern Min:
A Case Study of Shibei

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Abstract

This study seeks to describe and analyze the phonetic properties of Shibei variety of Northern Min Chinese, and demonstrate how an acoustic analysis may be done to the tonal system and segmental phonology of a Chinese dialect. The study gives a detailed analysis of the complex tonal system in Shibei, with its nine non-stopped tones contrasting in pitch contour, duration and phonation type. An investigation into the segmental phonemes includes measurement of VOT, plotting of vowel charts and discussion on typologically unusual variations and contrasts.

Interestingly, the phonology of Shibei also challenges the current phonological theory. This issue is also explored in the thesis.

Keywords: Acoustic phonetics, Tone, Phonation type, Chinese dialects, Northern Min