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ABSTRACT

This study, tenth in a series of publications entitled "Studies in the Phonology of Asian Language," describes the phonetic variation of the six tones in two-syllable utterances of Vietnamese. The study is based on acoustic measurements of actual words and phrases. Findings of the study concern: (1) overall pitch height of a tone, (2) tone variants and crossing in given syllable positions, (3) range of variation of tones, (4) differentiation of level tone from the falling tone, and (5) environmental influence on the six-tone contrast. (RL)

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STUDIES IN THE PHONOLOGY OF ASIAN LANGUAGES

X

INTERTONAL INFLUENCES IN
TWO-SYLLABLE UTTERANCES OF VIETNAMESE

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Preface

This study, Intertonal Influences in Two-Syllable Utterances of Vietnamese, is the tenth publication in the series Studies in the Phonology of Asian Languages. It is the result of a research project sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and serves as a final technical report for the contract NR 049-183, N00014-67-A-0269-0016.

The following works have been published previously in the series:

- Vol. 1 Korean Vowels
- Vol. 2 Duration of Korean Vowels
- Vol. 3 Acoustic Characteristics of Korean Stop Consonants
- Vol. 4 Vietnamese Vowels
- Vol. 5 Acoustic Features in the Manner Differentiation of Korean Stop Consonants
- Vol. 6 Complex Syllable Nuclei in Vietnamese
- Vol. 7 Korean Affricates
- Vol. 8 Vietnamese Tones
- Vol. 9 Word Accent in Japanese

Mieko S. Han

Los Angeles
June 1972

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INTERTONAL INFLUENCES IN
TWO-SYLLABLE UTTERANCES OF VIETNAMESE

Introduction

The purpose of the present study is to describe the acoustic characteristics of the six tones in two-syllable utterances of Vietnamese. Our study is based on the acoustic measurements of actual words and phrases. We have decided to use actual words and phrases for the naturalness of the test utterances. There is also the assumption that we can control the factors influencing the fundamental frequency (hereafter abbreviated as f_0) of voicing in speech without affecting the naturalness. The following factors influence f_0 of an utterance:

- 1) The emotive state of the speaker greatly affects the f_0 of voicing in speech.
- 2) The intonation pattern exerts great influence on the f_0 of the individual syllables.

The above two factors can be controlled to a certain extent by giving proper instructions to the informant and also by carefully selecting the frame in which the informant records the test utterances.

- 3) There is an inherent f_0 difference between different vowels spoken by an individual speaker in a given condition, which is derived from the inherent physiological constraints associated with the production

of the vowels. Peterson and Barney¹ report 17 Hz difference between English /u/ and /a/ in the speech of a male speaker with an average of about 130 Hz voice fundamental. Lehiste and Peterson² report 20 Hz difference between English /i/ and /a/ in the speech of a male speaker with an average of 170 Hz voice fundamental. According to Han,³ the difference is about 20 Hz between high vowels and other vowels of Vietnamese in the speech of a female speaker with an average of 280 Hz voice fundamental. A much smaller difference, 5 Hz, is observed by Ladefoged⁴ in Itsekiri, an African tone language. All of these differences are between high vowels and non-high vowels. In both Lehiste and Peterson, 1961 and Han, 1969, the greatest difference between mid and low vowels is 8 Hz which is less than 5% of the voice fundamental.

¹G. E. Peterson and H. L. Barney, "Control Methods Used in a Study of the Vowels," JASA, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1951, pp. 175-185.

²I. Lehiste and G. E. Peterson, "Some Basic Considerations in the Analysis of Intonation," JASA, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1961, pp. 419-425.

³M. S. Han, Studies in the Phonology of Asian Languages VIII: Vietnamese Tones, Acoustic Phonetics Research Laboratory, University of Southern California, 1969.

⁴P. Ladefoged, "A Phonetic Study of Western African Languages: An Auditory-Instrumental Survey," Monograph Series No. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1964.

4) The influence of consonants on the f_0 of syllable nucleus has been studied by House and Fairbanks⁵ and Lehiste and Peterson (Lehiste and Peterson, 1961). Both groups report that different consonants affect the f_0 of the following vowel within the same syllable to a different degree and that the difference in the degree of influence is attributed mainly to the voicedness and voicelessness of the consonants. Thus the f_0 of a vowel after a voiced consonant is generally lower than that of the same vowel after a voiceless consonant. The average difference caused by these two groups of consonants is 8 Hz (4.5% of voice fundamental) and 4.5 Hz (1.5% of voice fundamental) according to Lehiste and Peterson, 1961 and House and Fairbanks, 1953, respectively. The difference in the degree of influence of different consonants among voiced or voiceless consonants on the f_0 of the following vowel does not exceed those differences given above.

If we select the test utterances keeping the above influencing factors in mind, we can, to a certain extent, reduce the effect of these factors. Thus if we use those utterances which contain either only high vowels or non-high

⁵A. S. House and G. Fairbanks, "The Influence of Consonant Environment upon the Secondary Acoustical Characteristics of Vowels," JASA, Vol. 25, 1953, pp. 105-133.

vowels, then we can at least avoid the effect of the third factor in the above. Again if we use those utterances which contain either exclusively voiced consonants or voiceless consonants, then we can considerably reduce the consonantal effect on the f_o of the syllables. Even though the degree of the combining effect of the third and fourth factors above is not available in literature, we have observed that it is always much less than the sum of these two effects. We will describe in the following section how we selected the test utterances used in the present study.

Material and Method

For the purpose of obtaining a reference system of the six tone contrast, eighty-one one-syllable words were chosen, all of which are commonly used words in Vietnamese. These words have the syllable structure of CV or CVC, C's and V's being consonants and vowels respectively. Furthermore, all C's are voiced consonants except for a few voiceless stops in the final position of the words in rising and drop tones, and the syllable nucleus is the tense low central vowel /A/ in all eighty-one words. These test utterances were chosen with consideration of the factors influencing f_v values of utterances as discussed in the preceding section.

For two-syllable test utterances, six to twenty-five words or phrases have been selected for each of the thirty-six combinations of the six tones in the sequence of two syllables with the exception of the combination of the broken + curve tones where it is very difficult to find actual words and phrases suitable for our analysis. Thus we use only two test utterances for this combination. Again, with the influencing factors in mind, we tried to select only those utterances which begin with voiced consonants and contain non-high vowels as the syllable nucleus. Among the 1,118 syllables of our entire corpus of two-syllable test utterances, approximately 7% contain high vowels, most-

ly /u/. We have only six occurrences of voiceless consonants in syllable initial position.

In syllable final position, only four voiceless consonants /p,t,k,č/ occur with rising and drop tones. We are aware of the unusual pitch contour and higher overall pitch level in syllables ending in these consonants. In most cases, the pitch contour of rising tone in such syllables lacks the first portion of gradual pitch rise as typically observed in the other type of syllables. The drop tone in the syllables with those final voiceless consonants lacks, in most cases, the laryngealization at the end. Sampson⁶ regards these two types of phonetic tones as different from the rising and drop tones. However, in the present study we take these as variants of the rising and drop tones as Han (1969) does. We have included a considerable number of such syllables in our analysis due to the shortage of test utterances otherwise.

The test utterances of both one-syllable and two-syllables were recorded on magnetic tape in a sound-proof room by a female speaker of Hanoi dialect. Another female informant recorded part of the corpus. Two male informants were available to check some unclear cases in our

⁶G. Sampson, "Hanoi Dorsal Finals," Bulletin of the Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. XXXII, Part I, 1969.

principal informant's speech. Each of the female informants recorded each of the test utterances in the frame:

/tōi dɔ̄k cū/ 0, 1, 2, 3. /

"I read the word 0, 1, 2, 3."

The first three syllables in the frame, that is /tōi dɔ̄k cū/ were positioned mainly to provide the informant with a reference pitch level rather than to put the test utterances in a sentential environment. The informants were instructed to put a brief pause of approximately one second after each repetition of the test utterance. The informants were also asked to maintain during the four repetitions of each test utterance the same pitch level as much as possible, and not to lower the pitch of the later repetitions.

Narrow-band spectrograms were made from the recordings made in this manner. A close examination of the spectrograms revealed that the pitch contour of the first repetition of the test utterances was considerably different from that of the other three repetitions, which seemed to be the result of the influence of the high end-point pitch of the immediately preceding syllable /cū/. Thus the syllable which is numbered "0" in the above frame was not used in the present analysis. The remaining three repeti-

tions are similar in their pitch contour. In many cases the overall pitch level of each repetition gradually falls as it approaches the last syllable. This phenomenon, however, is not consistent throughout our recordings, and we, therefore, ignored it in this study.

On each spectrogram the 10th harmonic was measured and then converted into f_0 . In measuring the spectrograms, we tried to be consistent in the following procedures:

1. If a syllable begins with a consonant, the initial point of the following vowel was taken as the onset of the tone. Voiced consonants in the syllable initial position do not affect the pitch contour of the syllable.

2. If a syllable begins with a vowel, then the beginning of the steady portion of the harmonics was taken as the onset of the tone. It was consistently observed that a very sharp rise of pitch occurs in the first 5 to 10 centiseconds of the beginning of such vowels, which seems to be caused by the sudden release of the laryngeal constriction during the glottal stop which occurs typically in such environments.

3. As to the intermediate points, only those points where a significant pitch change occurs were measured. Thus the pitch of any intermediate point can be calculated by linear interpolation between two adjacent measurements.

4. When a syllable ends in a nasal, the nasal participates in shaping the pitch contour of the tone, and the measurements were taken with the nasals.

5. In many cases in which the higher harmonics were faint, the 5th or even the 2nd harmonic was measured.

From the description of our material and method, one might suspect the accuracy of our analysis because we ignored the effect of some factors such as the different degree of influence of fricatives, stops, nasals, and others on the f_0 of the syllable nucleus. But in the following pages, it will become clear that even a 5 to 10 Hz difference is, at least in our principal informant's speech, insignificant.

Results

1. Tones in One-Syllable Utterances

Table 1-A shows all the measurements of one-syllable utterances by our principal informant. Table 1-B presents the average f_0 values obtained from Table 1-A of the six tones. Measurements were taken at four points in time; at the onset, the mid, the two-thirds, and the end of the syllable.

Table 1-B
Average Fundamental Frequency of the Six Tones (in Hz)

Tone		No. of Occurrences	Onset	Mid	2/3	End
level	/-/	39	235	252		253
rising	/'/	51	223		254	341
broken	/~/	24	216		?	373
falling	/`/	45	188	184		170
curve	/^/	36	180		155	199
drop	/-'/	48	193		190	?

The ? mark represents a heavy laryngealization. On the spectrograms, harmonics around these points are interrupted and the exact f_0 values were not measurable.

Figure 1 is the schematic representation of the pitch contour of the six tones derived from the average f_0 's presented in Table 1-B. The duration of the syllable is approximately the same as the average duration of the syllables observed on the spectrograms.

Figure 1
Schematic Representations of the Six Tones in
One-Syllable Utterances

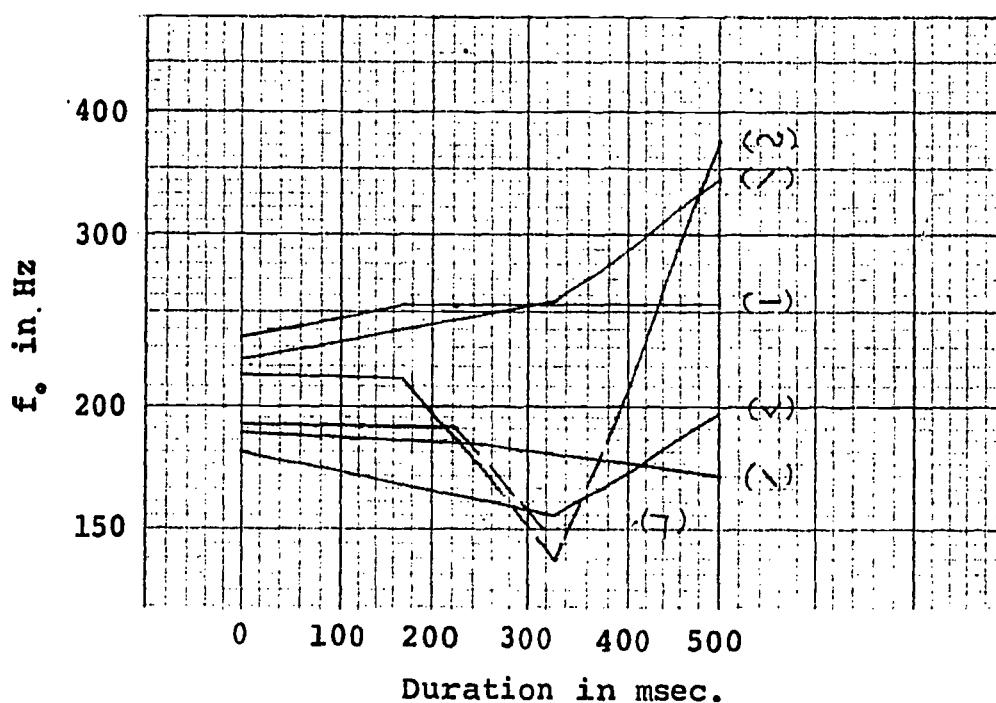


Figure 1 differs only in minor respect from our previous study. Han (1969) presented a similar figure based on the analysis of syllables composed only of a vowel. The slightly rising slope in the first third of the level tone /-/ seems to be a characteristic of this informant. With other informants, this was not observed to be consis-

tent.

The general characteristics of the six tones are as follows:

- a. Level Tone /-/: The onset value of the f_0 is the highest of all the six tones. The steady state of the level contour is always observed. The slight pitch rise at the onset, about 1.2 semitones, seems to be an idiosyncratic feature of our principal informant. Such a rise is rarely observed in other informant's speech. Even in the principal informant's speech this rise is not consistent. Thus we will not regard this feature as distinctive with regard to the level tone.
- b. Rising Tone //: The onset value of the f_0 is relatively high. From the high onset, the pitch gradually rises until a point representing two-thirds of the duration of the syllable nucleus. From this point, the pitch rises more rapidly. The pitch rise from the onset-point to the end-point is as great as 9 semitones (118 Hz.). The pitch rise in the first portion is about one quarter of the entire rise.
- c. Broken Tone /~/: The onset value of the f_0 is high. There is a brief period of level pitch in the first third. In the second third, a strong

laryngealization occurs and the frequency drops abruptly resulting in creaky voice. The last third is characterized by a very sharp pitch rise. The pitch difference between the onset-point and end-point is approximately 12 semitones (157 Hz.).

- d. Falling Tone '/': This tone is characterized by its low onset value of the f_0 and a gradual pitch fall to the end-point. The pitch fall is about 1.7 semitones (18 Hz.).
- e. Curve Tone '/': The onset value of the f_0 is lowest among the six tones. The low pitch at the onset falls gradually to a point representing two-thirds of the duration of the syllable nucleus. From here, the pitch rises gradually to the end. The pitch fall in the first portion is 2.7 semitones (25 Hz.) and the pitch rise at the end is 4.7 semitones (44 Hz.). With other informants the amount of pitch rise in the second portion is much smaller.
- f. Drop Tone '/': The onset value of the f_0 is higher than that of the falling and curve tones but lower than the other tones. This tone is characterized by a slight pitch fall in the first two-thirds and an abrupt pitch fall in the last third which is accompanied by laryngealization. With most

informants, the duration of this tone is much shorter, about two-thirds of the duration for the other tones.

In the above discussion we have pointed out that the onset value of the f_0 for one tone is higher or lower relative to that of the other tones. As seen in Figure 1, the f_0 of the onset-point is highest in the level tone and lowest in the curve tone, the difference between them being 5.1 semitones (55 Hz.). Within this range the onset-points of the six tones are distributed in such a way that the onset of the level, rising, and broken tones are higher than those of the other three tones. On the other hand, the pitch range representing end-points of the six tones is much greater. The difference between the highest and lowest end-points, (the broken and falling tones respectively), is 19.9 semitones (203 Hz.). The end-point of the drop tone is even lower than that of the falling tone, but since the f_0 of the end-point is hardly measurable on the spectrograms due to heavy laryngealization the end-point of the falling tone was taken as the lowest. However, the size of these ranges depends upon the average voice fundamental of the speaker. For example, in the speech of Informant 4 (male) in Han (1969), whose average voice fundamental is in the vicinity of 140 Hz., the pitch ranges of the onset and end-

points of the six tones are 1.5 semitones (12 Hz.) and 10.5 semitones (71 Hz.) respectively.

It can be seen in Table 1-B and Figure 1 that the three tones which have relatively high onset f_0 values also have higher end-points than those for the falling, curve, and drop tones. For the sake of reference, we will refer to the three tones with high onset and end f_0 values (i.e., level, rising, and broken) as high tones, and the remaining three as low tones.

2. Tone Variation in Two-Syllable Utterances

Table 2-A in the following 15 pages presents the measurements of the f_0 for all the two-syllable test utterances used for this study. This table contains all thirty-six possible combinations of the six tones on two-syllable words, and the points of measurement are the same as those described for one-syllable utterances in the preceding section. The rows numbered 1, 2, and 3 are the three repetitions of the two-syllable utterances whose phonemic representations are given at the left top above the three rows. In each row, the f_0 measurements of the first and second syllables are given. The mark ? represents laryngealization. The grand total of the f_0 values for each point of measurement and also the average are given at the end of the measurements for all the test utterances of each type.

5. Level + Curve

	First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable			
	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	
ān zō	1 280	280	280	220	145	145	ān ū	1 280	280	280	205	165	170
	2 270	270	260	215	155	155		2 265	265	270	210	160	160
	3 265	265	260	210	160	160		3 250	250	260	195	160	170
ān zāl	1 280	280	280	225	140	140	ān ūl	1 280	280	280	230	165	170
	2 260	260	275	225	125	125		2 250	260	265	190	165	165
	3 255	255	255	210	130	145		3 255	260	265	215	165	165
bāk bāl	1 225	255	275	225	160	160	zūŋ zāl	1 250	285	280	235	165	165
	2 225	255	260	215	160	160		2 250	280	280	220	150	150
	3 215	245	250	210	150	150		3 250	275	270	215	150	170
dāu dē	1 235	270	275	230	140	140	dōŋ dāu	1 240	275	270	245	175	175
	2 225	265	270	235	160	160		2 235	275	265	235	145	145
	3 225	260	260	215	155	155		3 230	260	255	230	135	135
dān dā	1 235	275	280	240	165	165	māl zūl	1 255	270	270	220	150	150
	2 235	260	265	225	155	155		2 240	265	260	205	155	150
	3 225	250	255	210	155	155		3 235	260	255	190	160	160
dōŋ dū	1 240	290	285	230	165	165	māl ūlān	1 245	265	265	220	170	170
	2 235	280	275	220	155	155		2 245	270	270	195	170	170
	3 220	260	260	210	160	160		3 230	260	255	210	145	145
ēm zō	1 255	260	260	230	140	140	nān zāl	1 235	275	280	225	155	155
	2 260	265	270	220	140	140		2 255	270	260	220	150	150
	3 250	255	255	220	135	135		3 230	250	260	215	145	170
ēm ūm	1 255	255	265	215	185	185	vō vān	1 250	280	280	235	155	155
	2 260	260	265	205	140	140		2 235	270	270	225	155	155
	3 250	250	250	210	160	160		3 240	275	275	215	150	150
nāŋ bāŋ	1 260	285	275	225	160	210	Total	12560	13605	13625	11145	7865	8055
	2 245	280	265	230	155	195	Ave.	246.2	266.7	267.1	218.5	154.2	157.9
	3 245	265	260	220	155	180							

6. Level + Drop

	First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable			
	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	
ān bān	1 300	300	290	235	220	?	dāk zūk	1 245	260	270	225	190	?
	2 280	280	280	235	220	?		2 235	265	270	225	190	?
	3 270	270	270	230	205	?		3 230	255	265	215	170	?
bān māt	1 275	275	275	245	215	?	pān dāu	1 245	290	290	250	205	?
	2 260	260	260	235	210	?		2 245	280	280	245	220	?
	3 240	245	245	225	200	?		3 240	265	265	235	185	?
gān zāl	1 250	290	285	230	200	?	pō dāu	1 260	290	290	255	205	?
	2 245	290	290	235	215	?		2 245	270	270	245	210	?
	3 235	280	280	225	210	?		3 240	255	255	235	185	?
zūŋ dān	1 255	290	280	255	220	?	nō lā	1 245	275	275	250	200	?
	2 265	290	275	245	215	?		2 245	270	265	245	175	?
	3 255	275	265	235	215	?		3 240	265	260	235	195	?
vō zōŋ	1 265	295	290	245	210	?	ū dōŋ	1 240	265	265	250	205	?
	2 255	285	280	245	210	?		2 250	275	260	240	200	?
	3 250	270	265	230	200	?		3 230	245	250	235	185	?
vō dāu	1 260	280	265	250	220	?	vāŋ zōl	1 245	255	290	245	215	?
	2 255	275	265	235	200	?		2 240	245	275	240	210	?
	3 245	265	260	235	195	?		3 235	245	265	230	185	?
vō vāt	1 270	290	290	250	210	?	Total	9790	10605	10600	9270	7900	
	2 255	275	280	225	195	?	Ave.	251.0	271.9	271.7	237.6	202.5	
	3 250	255	250	225	185	?							

d. FALING + OTHER COMBINATIONS

1. Falling + Level

First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable			
onset	mid	end	onset	mid	end	onset	mid	end	onset	mid	end	onset	mid	end	onset	mid	end	
vĂn zp	1 225 225 225	225 225 220	220 220 220	265 280 280	270 275 275	275 275 270	bĂn Ăn	1 230 230	230 230 220	285 290 295	290 280 280	295 290 270	dĂu dĂn	1 225 225	225 225 220	240 270 280	245 280 280	245 270 270
ză̄n zp	1 230 225 220	225 225 220	220 220 220	245 270 275	240 265 270	270 275 270	bĂn pĂu	1 235 230	230 225 220	265 285 285	285 270 270	260 255 260	dĂn Ăn	1 235 230	230 225 220	260 265 265	260 260 260	255 250 250
dĂu zp	1 240 245 245	245 250 250	250 250 250	275 300 295	270 285 280	280 280 280	ză̄n Ăn	1 235 220	220 220 220	260 275 260	275 260 255	260 255 250	dĂu nĂn	1 215 225	225 220 215	245 265 270	245 245 250	245 240 245
gă̄l pĂm	1 225 245 245	245 250 250	250 250 250	250 310 280	270 270 270	280 280 270	dĂu dĂu	1 225 230	230 225 220	235 285 275	285 270 270	275 265 265	dĂu Ăn	1 220 220	220 220 220	270 270 270	270 270 270	265 260 260
lĂm Ăn	1 225 220 220	225 225 220	220 220 220	255 275 270	255 265 265	270 270 270	lĂm Ăn	1 225 225	225 220 220	275 275 275	275 265 265	265 265 265	dĂn nĂm	1 230 230	230 220 220	245 270 265	245 265 265	245 230 250
mă̄t pĂu	1 225 235 230	230 230 225	240 240 240	275 270 270	265 265 270	265 265 255	mĂA dĂn	1 220 220	220 220 220	250 275 275	275 260 260	260 260 245	lĂm zĂu	1 225 220	220 220 220	250 270 265	250 260 260	245 240 245
ngă̄l dĂm	1 230 230 225	230 235 220	240 235 215	265 265 270	255 255 260	260 255 260	dĂn Ăn	1 230 225	225 220 220	270 270 260	270 265 255	265 245 245	pĂ mĂ	1 230 230	230 230 230	245 275 270	245 270 260	245 235 260
Total 14025 14110 13940 15750 16845 16755																		
Ave. 222.6 223.9 221.2 250.0 267.3 265.9																		

2. Falling + Rising

First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable			First Syllable			Second Syllable		
onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end	onset	mid	end	onset	2/3	end
bĂn lĂn	1 215 210	205 205	205 210 300	210 200	200	2 215 210	205 195	195 195	195 190	190 295	295 280	tĂn zĂ	1 205 205	205 200	205 205 290	205 210 270	205 200 260
bĂn gă̄l	1 210 205	205 205	210 210 330	205 210 295	295 200	200	2 215 210	205 190	190 210	210 370	370 360	1 215 210	210 200	205 205 305	215 210 335	210 200 265	
bĂn tĂ	1 195 205	200 200	205 215 320	200 215 300	300 255	255	2 215 210	205 190	190 210	225 265	265 350	1 205 205	205 200	235 270 370	205 215 330	225 200 310	
bĂn bĂn	1 195 210	205 205	205 210 300	210 200	290	2 215 210	205 195	195 205	210 340	340 310	1 215 210	210 205	215 270 340	220 215 320	225 205 330		
bĂn zĂ	1 205 210	205 200	210 205 295	205 210 320	320 280	280	2 220 210	205 195	195 205	205 330	330 310	1 215 210	210 205	205 210 300	210 215 290	210 205 290	
dĂu gă̄l	1 205 205	200 190	190 200 310	200 300	310	2 205 205	205 195	195 205	210 285	285 310	1 215 210	210 205	225 265 355	225 265 360	225 250 320		
dĂu gĂn	1 210 220	205 205	205 200 290	215 200	290	2 215 210	205 195	195 195	205 300	300 290	1 215 210	210 205	205 205 255	205 205 270	205 195 235		
Total 13090 13035 12725 13090 13915 19150																	
Ave. 207.7 206.9 201.9 207.7 220.8 304.5																	

In Table 2-B-1, the average f_v values for each point of measurement which appeared at the end of each combination in Table 2-A, are arranged in six groups, a,b,c,d,e, and f. The first group 'a' presents six combinations having the level tone in the first syllable and the six different tones in the second syllable; and the second group 'b' presents six combinations having the rising tone in the first syllable and the six different tones in the second syllable. The four other groups, c,d,e, and f are also arranged in the same way. These rearrangements were made to facilitate the analysis of the variation of individual tones in the first syllable, and also that of the pattern of six tone contrast in the second syllable.

Figure 2-B-1 presents graphically the same data shown in Table 2-B-1. The six parts of Table 2-B-1, a through f, correspond to the six schematic representations, a through f of Figure 2-B-1 respectively. The duration of the syllable is approximately the same as the average duration of the actual utterances spoken by our principal informant as they are seen on the spectrograms, and the f_v values of the pitch contours have been plotted on a logarithmic scale so that these figures might approximate perceptual reality. The thin lines between the first and second syllables have been drawn to show the respective tonal environments. The duration of the transition between two syllables in

Figures 2-B-1 is about twice as long as that of the actual utterances. The thin lines were drawn in this way to facilitate the reading of the respective environments of the tones.

Table 2-B-2 displays the same data presented in Table 2-B-1 except that they have been rearranged to facilitate the analysis of the variation of each tone in the second syllable position. This display also facilitates the analysis of the variation in the pattern of the six tone contrast in the first syllable position. Tone combinations are rearranged into six groups according to the tone in the second syllable. The first group in Table 2-B-2 consists of the first combinations of the six groups in Table 2-B-1, in which the second syllable bears the level tone, and the second group in Table 2-B-2 consists of the second combinations of the six groups in Table 2-B-1, in which the second syllable bears the rising tone, and so on. The measurements of a combination in Table 2-B-2 are exact duplicates of the corresponding combination in Table 2-B-1.

Figure 2-B-2 presents graphically the same measurements presented in Table 2-B-2. The six figures, a through f in Figure 2-B-2 correspond to the six parts, a through f in Table 2-B-2 respectively. These figures have been drawn in the same way as described for Figure 2-B-1 and should be read accordingly.

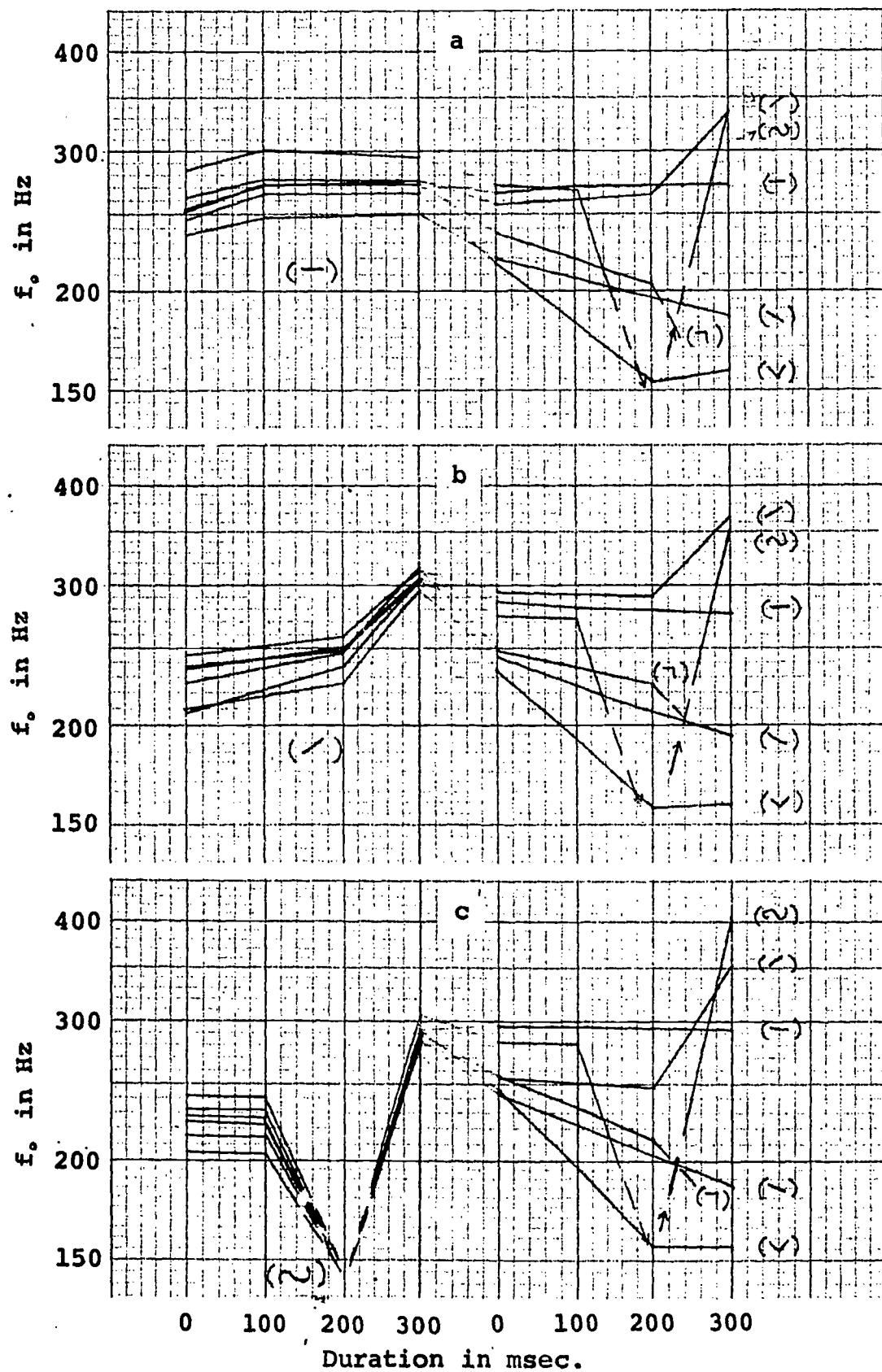
Table 2-B-1
 Average F_0 of the Tones in Two-Syllable Utterances
 (Tone in the First Syllable Constant)

a.	Combination	No. of Occurrences	First Syllable				Second Syllable			
			onset	mid	2/3	end	onset	mid	2/3	end
	level + level	75	253	271		273	267	271		272
	level + rising	63	261	276		273	258		264	336
	level + broken	72	284	301		295	272		?	373
	level + falling	72	236	249		250	220	201		186
	level + curve	51	246	267		267	219		154	158
	level + drop	39	251	272		272	238		203	?
b.	rising + level	54	235		250	305	286	281		277
	rising + rising	72	245		259	311	294		290	367
	rising + broken	24	237		249	302	274		?	361
	rising + falling	57	210		226	295	243	215		194
	rising + curve	30	209		238	301	233		157	158
	rising + drop	27	227		248	314	249		226	?
c.	broken + level	42	232		?	292	292	295		292
	broken + rising	21	229		?	282	253		247	351
	broken + broken	42	241		?	305	282		?	406
	broken + falling	42	205		?	282	242	212		186
	broken + curve	6	223		?	290	243		157	157
	broken + drop	33	216		?	287	255		213	?

d.	Combination	No. of Occurrences	First Syllable				Second Syllable			
			onset	mid	2/3	end	onset	mid	2/3	end
	falling + level	63	223	224		221	250	267		266
	falling + rising	63	208	207		202	208		221	305
	falling + broken	42	220	215		214	217		?	352
	falling + falling	48	206	208		202	203	200		174
	falling + curve	18	207	215		211	199		156	162
	falling + drop	57	210	214		208	207		206	?
e.	curve + level	54	194		167	161	225	260		262
	curve + rising	30	190		156	156	190		218	309
	curve + broken	18	189		159	160	193		?	342
	curve + falling	33	183		168	160	193	207		187
	curve + curve	36	184		157	166	184		151	178
	curve + drop	48	186		166	166	194		196	?
f.	drop + level	60	220		216	?	249	274		273
	drop + rising	45	212		211	?	219		247	347
	drop + broken	63	214		209	?	209		?	338
	drop + falling	66	202		201	?	202	204		177
	drop + curve	39	188		194	?	187		153	174
	drop + drop	72	200		199	?	205		199	?

Figure 2-B-1

Schematic Representations of Two-Tone Combinations
(Tone in the First Syllable Constant)



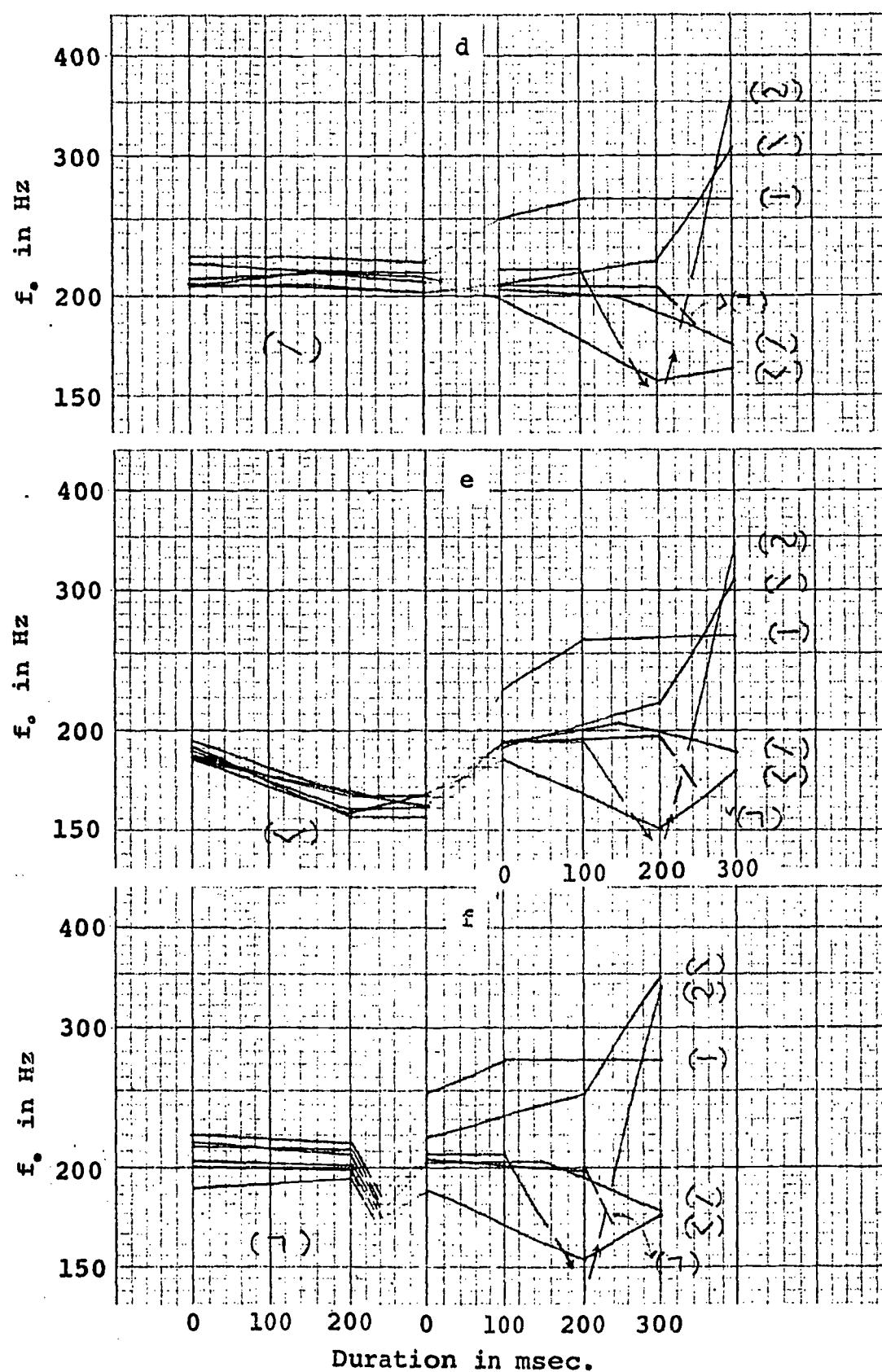


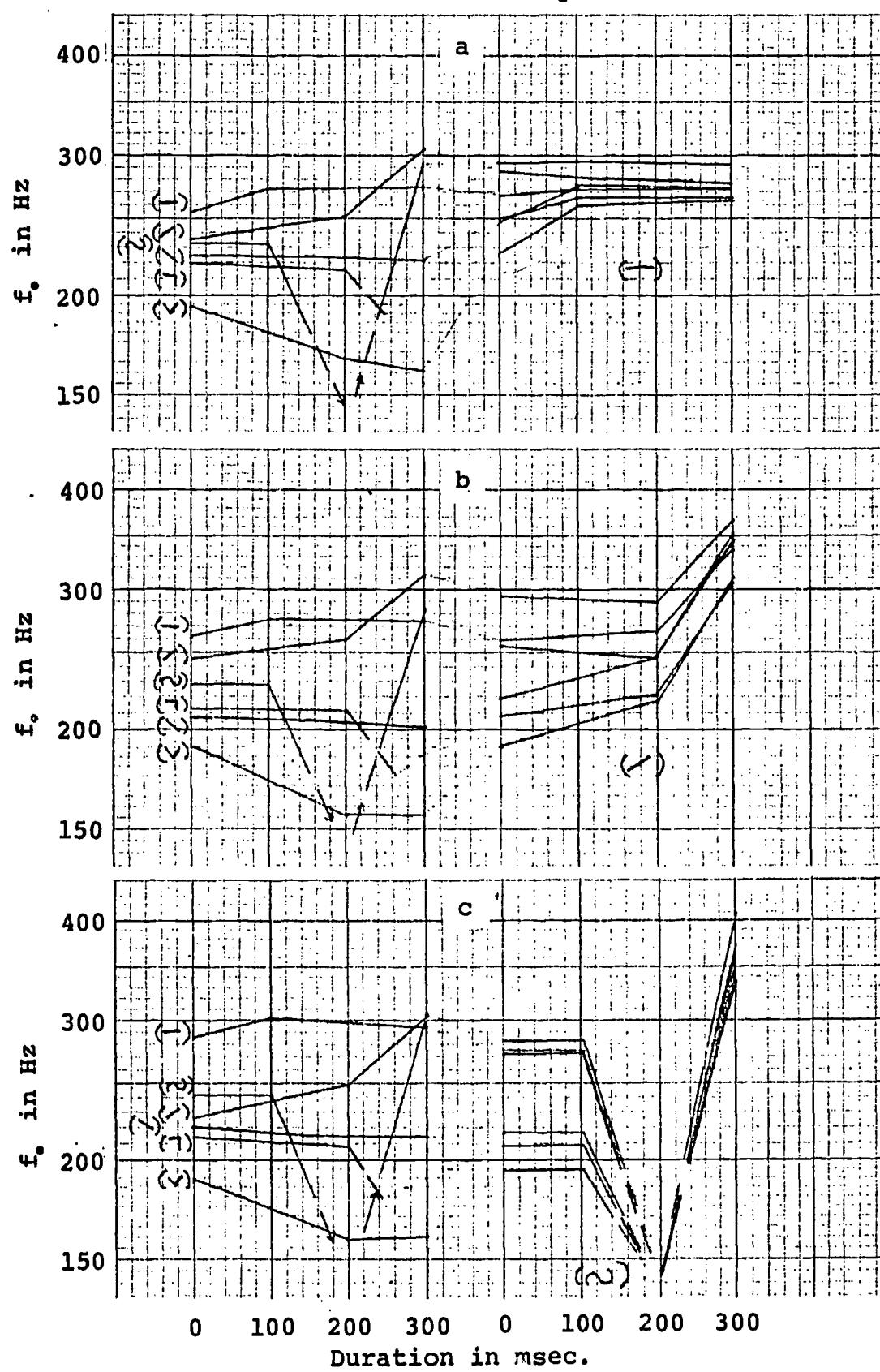
Table 2-B-2
Average F₀ of the Tones in Two-Syllable Utterances
 (Tone in the Second Syllable Constant)

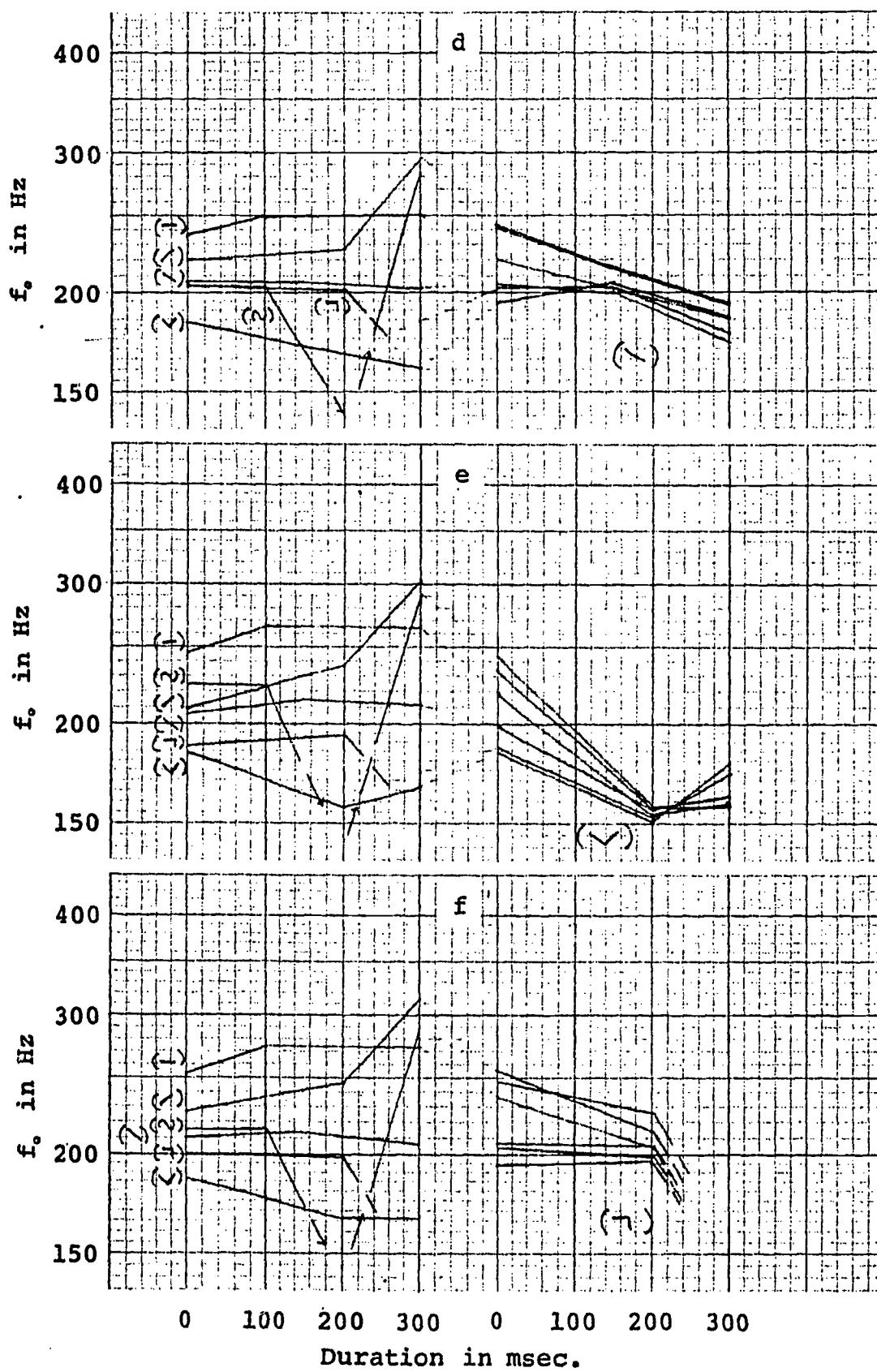
a.	Combination	No. of Occurrences	First Syllable				Second Syllable			
			onset	mid	2/3	end	onset	mid	2/3	end
	level + level	75	253	271		273	267	271		272
	rising + level	54	235		250	305	286	281		277
	broken + level	42	232		?	292	292	295		292
	falling + level	63	223	224		221	250	267		266
	curve + level	54	194		167	161	225	260		262
	drop + level	60	220		216	?	249	274		273
b.										
	level + rising	63	261	276		273	258	264	336	
	rising + rising	72	245		259	311	294	290	367	
	broken + rising	21	229		?	282	253	247	351	
	falling + rising	63	208	207		202	208	221	305	
	curve + rising	30	190		156	156	190	218	309	
	drop + rising	45	212		211	?	219	247	347	
c.										
	level + broken	72	284	301		295	272	?	373	
	rising + broken	24	237		249	302	274	?	361	
	broken + broken	42	241		?	305	282	?	206	
	falling + broken	42	220	215		214	217	?	352	
	curve + broken	18	189		159	160	193	?	342	
	drop + broken	63	214		209	?	209	?	338	

d.	Combination	No. of Occurrences	First Syllable				Second Syllable			
			onset	mid	2/3	end	onset	mid	2/3	end
	level + falling	72	236	249		250	220	201		186
	rising + falling	57	210		226	295	243	215		194
	broken + falling	42	205		?	282	242	212		186
	falling + falling	48	206	208		202	203	200		174
	curve + falling	33	183		168	160	193	207		187
	drop + falling	66	212		201	?	202	204		177
e.										
	level + curve	51	246	267		267	219	154	158	
	rising + curve	30	209		238	301	233	157	158	
	broken + curve	6	223		?	290	243	157	157	
	falling + curve	18	207	215		211	199	156	162	
	curve + curve	36	184		157	166	184	151	178	
	drop + curve	39	188		194	?	187	153	174	
f.										
	level + drop	39	251	272		272	238	203	?	
	rising + drop	27	227		248	314	249	226	?	
	broken + drop	33	216		?	287	255	213	?	
	falling + drop	57	210	214		208	207	206	?	
	curve + drop	48	186		166	166	194	196	?	
	drop + drop	72	200		199	?	205	199	?	

Figure 2-B-2

Schematic Representations of Two-Tone Combinations
(Tone in the Second Syllable Constant)





In the following, the data are analyzed from two different viewpoints: (1) how individual tones are affected by their environments and, (2) how the pattern contrasting the six tones varies depending upon the environment. The former involves the analysis of phonetic variation of individual phonemic tones and the latter the variation of the system of contrast of the six tones.

A. Variation of Individual Tones

In this section we will examine the variation of individual tones in terms of (1) the characteristic pitch contour of the tones and, (2) the overall pitch height of the tones. We will discuss first the variation of the tones in their pitch contour.

One might get a general impression from Figures 2-B-1 and 2-B-2 that the overall pitch of a tone varies to a great extent but the basic pitch contours of the six tones as described in the preceding chapter for one-syllable utterances are modified to a much less extent. This seems to be true particularly with the level, rising, broken and drop tones. Of course, we are aware that the variation of the rising, broken, and drop tones in the second syllable position as shown in Figures 2-B-2-b, 2-B-2-c, and 2-B-2-f is not simply a variation in overall pitch. For example, in Figure 2-B-2-b, the f_0 actually decreases in the first two-

thirds of some of the contours, in others, it rises. In other words, the contours themselves differ. We will, however, exclude the variation of these tones in these particular environments from the discussion of the variation of tone contour, since this is the type of variation which does not result in an overlap in contour between different tones. In the following we will discuss only those kinds of variation which result in an overlap or near-overlap between different tones.

We notice in the first syllable of Figure 2-B-1-d that there is very little pitch fall in the falling tone in this environment and the contour is quite similar to that of the level tone. The contour of these variants are different from that of the level tone only in the initial portion of the contour, the variants of the level tone having slight pitch rise at the beginning of the contour. But as we have already noted, this initial rise in the level tone is not consistent in the speech of other informants, and even in the principal informant it has been observed that there are a number of cases in which the initial rise does not occur. In consequence, this case of overlap in pitch contour between the level and falling tones suggests that the more consistent distinctive feature differentiating these two tones is the relative height of the overall pitch, not the shape of the contour.

For the curve tone in one-syllable utterances, a considerable pitch rise, about 4.7 semitones, has been observed in the last third of the syllable nucleus. We notice, however, that in the first syllable of Figure 2-B-1-e, there is hardly any pitch rise in the last one-third of the curve tone. This phenomenon has been observed also in a male informant's speech. Even in the other informant's speech, in which the final rise is observed, the amount of rise is much reduced in this environment. For example, in the speech of another female speaker, the final rise in monosyllabic utterances is 9.8 semitones and the rise in the same environment as the first syllable in Figure 2-B-1-e has been reduced to 5.8 semitones. What is common in the speech of all the informants is the location of the point at which the pitch fall from the onset turns to another phase, that is, level or slight rise. There seems to be a strong indication that the final pitch rise at the last one-third is less important than the location of the turning point mentioned above. In certain cases the location of the turning point does not seem to be crucial. Examine the pitch contour of the curve tone before the falling tone as shown in the first syllable of Figure 2-B-1-e or the first syllable of Figure 2-B-2-d. This particular variant of the curve tone does not show any reduction in the pitch fall at the point two-thirds of the entire

duration of the pitch contour; instead the pitch fall is gradual without any change to the end of the contour. The resultive contour is hardly different from the pitch contour of the falling tone in one syllable utterances (cf. Figure 1).

Now how does such a variation of the curve tone contrast with the real falling tone? The answer is immediately clear if we compare the pitch contours of the falling and curve tones in the first syllable of Figure 2-B-2-d. The overall pitch of the contour of the falling tone is much higher than that of the curve tone in this identical environment, higher by 2.1 semitones at the onset and 4.4 semitones at the end-point. Here, both the falling and curve tones have undergone a considerable modification in their pitch contour but the manner and extent of the modification are such that the basic pattern of contrast between them is kept unaffected. We will discuss more about the nature of such variation later in this paper.

Let's focus our attention on the overall pitch height of each tone in different environments. In Table 3-A, which is derived from Table 2-B-1, the measurements of the highest and lowest variants of each tone in the first syllable position are tabulated. In this table, the tone labels in the leftmost column are followed by information about the highest and lowest variants of the respective

tones. In the left half of this table, the environment of the highest variants of the tones and the f_v measurements of these variants are given. In the right half of the table, the same kind of information about the lowest variants of the tones is presented. For example, the row beginning with the label 'level' shows that the highest variant of the level tone in the first syllable position occurs before the broken tone as indicated by '---' and the f_v measurements at three different points are 284-301-295. The second half of this row shows that the lowest variant occurs before the falling tone (i.e., '-') and the f_v measurements are 236-249-250. In a similar manner the variations in pitch height of other tones are presented.

In Table 3-B, which is derived from Table 2-B-2, the environments of the highest and lowest variants of each tone in the second syllable position and the f_v measurements of these variants are presented. This table should be read in the same way as Table 3-A except that the tones given in the leftmost column occur in the second syllable position.

For an easier comparison of the highest and lowest variants of each tone in different syllable positions, the variants of each tone have been schematically presented on semi-logarithmic graph paper as in Figures 3-A and 3-B. The six figures on the left hand side of pages 50 and 51 are derived from the information in Table 3-A, thus representing

Table 3-A
The Highest and Lowest Variants of the Six Tones in the First Syllable Position
(in Hz)

Tone	Highest Variant						Lowest Variant					
	Environ	Onset	Mid	F. ^o	2/3	End	Environ	Onset	Mid	F. ^o	2/3	End
level	-+~	284	301	295	-+'		236	249			250	
rising	'+'	245		259	311	'+'	210			226	295	
broken	-+-	232		?	292	-+'	205			?	282	
falling	'+-	223	224		221	'+'	206	208			202	
curve	'+-	194		167	161	'+'v	184			157	166	
drop	-+-	220		216	?	-+'v	188			194	?	

Table 3-B
The Highest and Lowest Variants of the Six Tones in the Second Syllable Position
(in Hz)

Tone	Highest Variant					Lowest Variant							
	Environ	Onset	Mid	f _o	2/3	End	Environ	Onset	Mid	f _o	2/3	End	
level	~+-	292	295		292		v+-		225	260		262	
rising	'+'	294			290	367	v+'		190			218 309	
broken	-+~	282			?	406	v+~		193			?	342
falling	'+'	243	215			194	'+'		203	200		174	
curve	~+~	243			157	157	v+~		184			151 178	
drop	'+'~	249			226	?	v+'~		194			196 ?	

Figure 3-A
**The Highest and Lowest Variants
 of the Tones in the First Syllable
 Position**

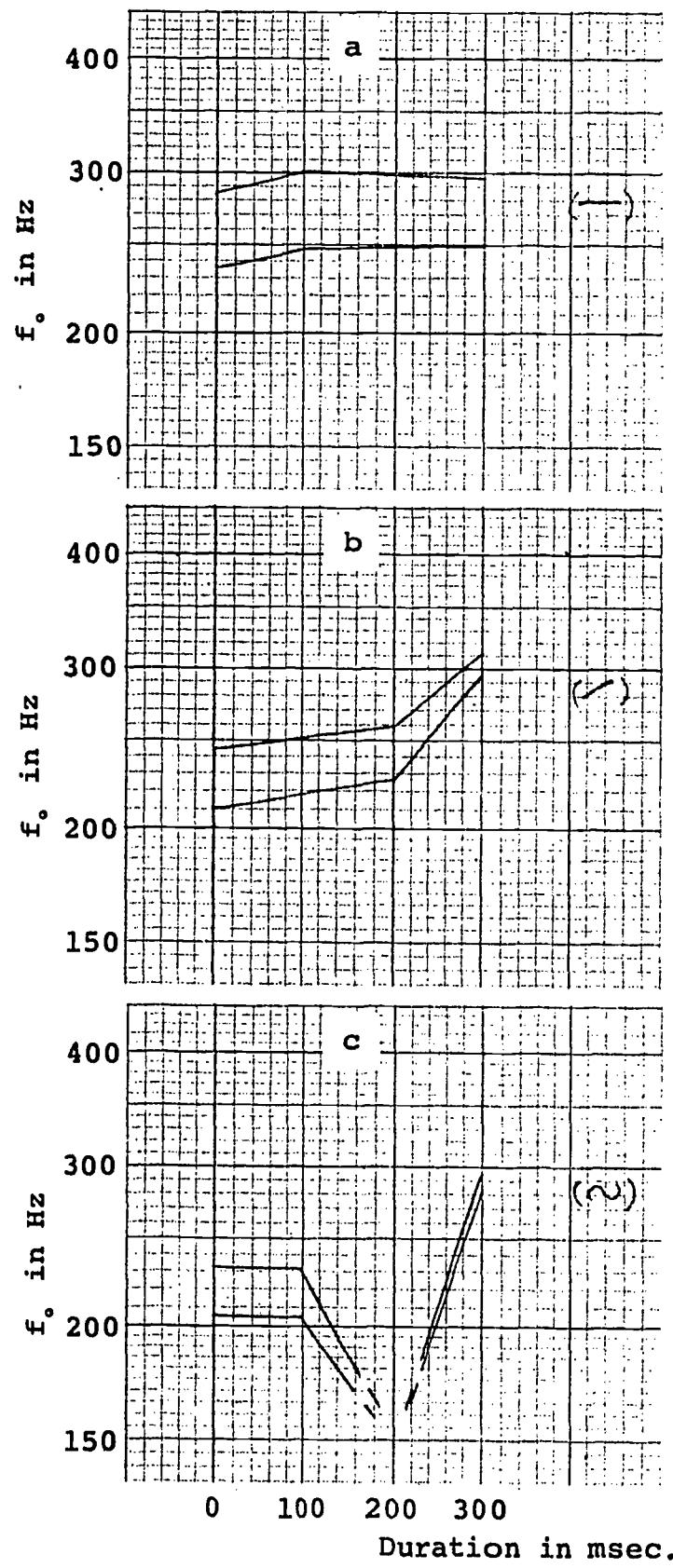
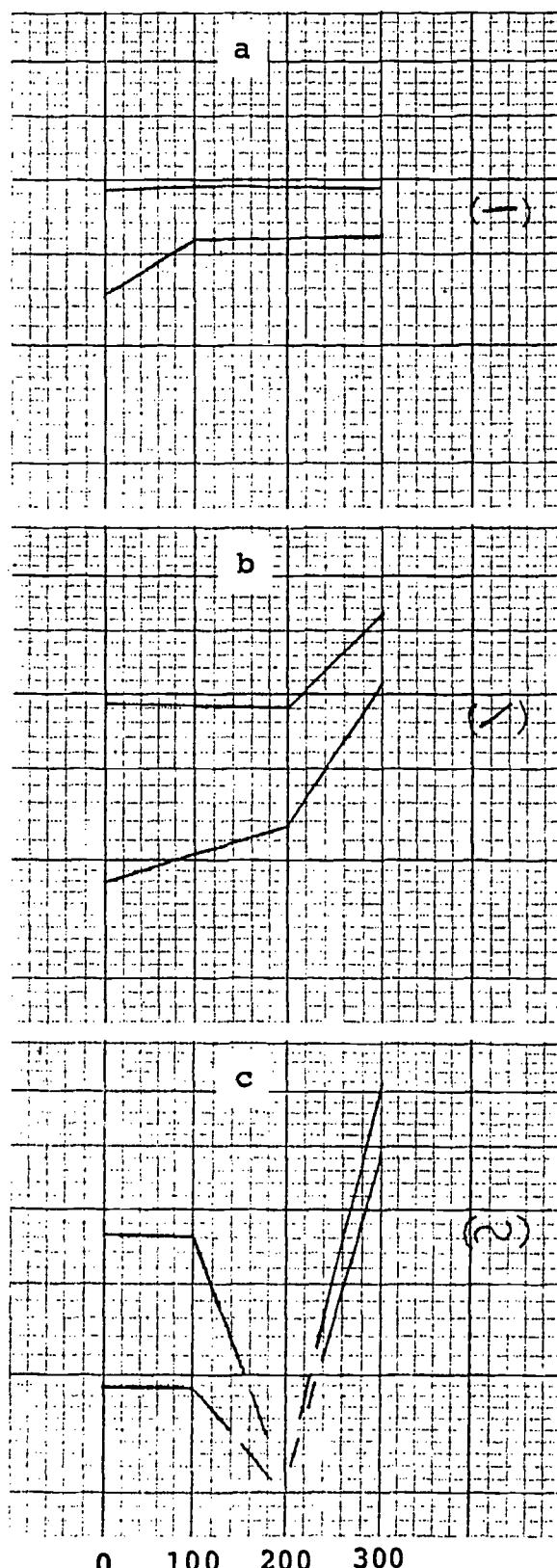
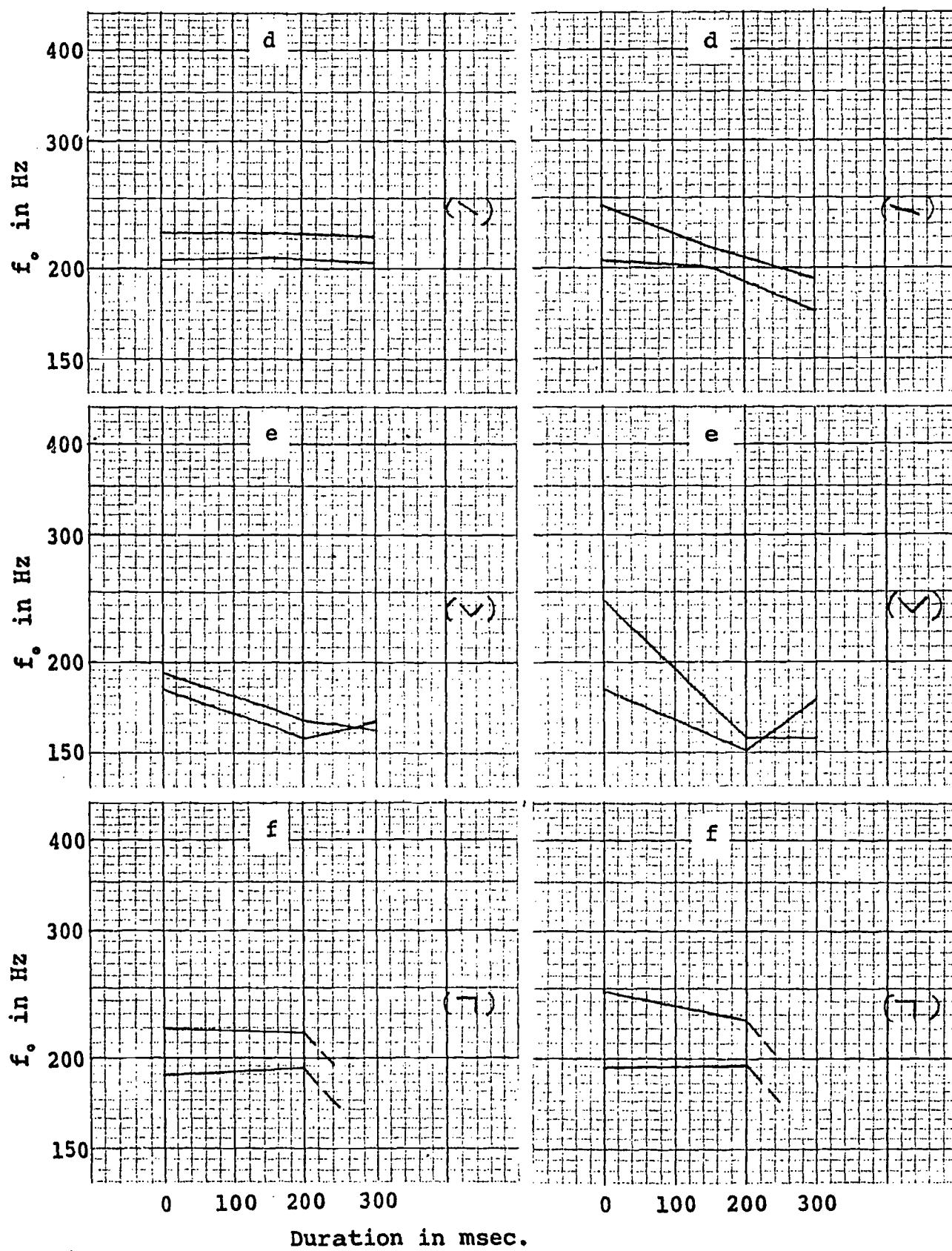


Figure 3-B
**The Highest and Lowest Variants of
 the Tones in the Second Syllable
 Position**





the highest and lowest variants of the tones in the first syllable position. On the other hand, the six figures on the right-hand side of these two pages are based on Table 3-B, thus representing the highest and lowest variants of the tones in the second syllable position.

In the figures above, two general observations can be made, (1) the difference between the highest and lowest variants of each tone is greater in the second syllable position than in the first syllable position, and (2) the degree of variation is not the same at onset and end-point of a tone and is usually greater at the onset-point than at the end-point.

The first observation noted above is readily seen by comparing the distances between the corresponding points of the highest and lowest variants in the left-hand side figures with those distances in the matching right-hand side figures. For example, take Figures 3-A-b and 3-B-b which show the highest and lowest variants of the rising tone in the first and second syllable positions. As shown in Figure 3-B-b, the differences between the highest and lowest variants at the onset and end-point are 104 Hz (9 semitones) and 58 Hz (3.1 semitones) respectively. These differences are roughly three times as great as the corresponding differences in Figures 3-A-b which are 35 Hz (2.8 semitones) at the onset and 16 Hz (0.9 semitone) at the end-point. With the level

tone, this tendency is not manifested; that is, the two variants in Figure 3-B-a are closer to each other than the two variants in Figure 3-A-a. However, we will not take this case as implying that the level tone is exceptional in this respect. In our second female informant, exactly the same phenomenon as observed for other tones has been observed with the level tone.

The exact cause of such phenomena is unknown to us, but one thing is clear, and that is, in two-syllable utterances the progressive effect, which is defined as the effect of a tone on another in the immediately following syllable, is greater than the regressive effect which is the effect in the opposite direction. A tone is realized as an elevated or lowered variant in anticipation of a following high or low tone, and the tone in the second syllable, in turn, is raised or lowered depending upon the relative height of the preceding tone. Thus the effect is reciprocal and the effect of the tone in the first syllable on the second syllable is greater than that of the second syllable on the preceding one.

Our second observation can be seen in Figures 3-A and 3-B; when a tone is raised or lowered due to its tonal environment the amount of variation is greater at the onset than the end-point. This phenomenon is evident in both the first and second syllable positions and seems to be more prominent with the tones which have extremely high or low

final target points, such as the broken and curve tones. With other informants, this phenomenon is not as consistent or prominent as the first observation. However, this could be taken as an indication that the end-point of the tones is more stable and resistent to the environmental influence.

In addition to the observations discussed above, it should be noted that the curves for the highest and lowest variants do not cross each other, with the exception of the curve tone. In other words, both the onset and end-points of the highest variant of a tone are higher than those of the lowest variant of the same tone. In general, this holds true with the other intermediate variants of the tone; that is, a variant with a higher onset than another variant also has a higher end-point than the other variant. This is the very reason why the variants of a tone keep their basic contour despite their distribution within a large range of pitch. This will be discussed further in the following section.

B. Variation of the Pattern of Six Tone Contrast

In the following section, we will discuss the manner in which the six different tones contrast with each other. This information is found in the second syllables of Figure 2-B-1 and the first syllables in Figure 2-B-2. At first glance, all the pictures of the six tone contrast look very similar to

each other and also look like duplicates of Figure 1 which shows the pattern of the six tone contrast in one-syllable utterances. However, a closer look will reveal some interesting phonemena and systematic variations behind the similarity, some of which will be described below.

As was mentioned when we described the pitch contours of the six tones in one-syllable utterances, the pitch height of some tones (e.g., rising tone) are higher than those of others (e.g., falling tone). We pointed out that at the onset the difference between the f_0 values for the highest and lowest tones, (the level and curve tones respectively), is 5.1 semitones; and at the end-point the difference between the highest and lowest tones (broken and falling tones respectively) is 19.9 semitones. To check how these ranges at the onset and end-points of the six tones vary depending on different environments, Table 4 has been prepared.

The left half of Table 4 presents the differences between the highest and lowest tones at the onset and end-points in the first syllable position. This part of the table is derived from Table 2-B-2. For example, the leftmost column in the left half of Table 4 indicates the environment of the occurrence of the six tones, each of the six rows in this table correspond to the six parts of Table 2-B-2. In the first part 'a' of Table 2-B-2, the f_0 of the highest onset among those of the six tones, that of the level tone,

is 253 Hz. and the lowest onset, that of the curve tone, is 194 Hz. The difference between these two points, which is 59 Hz. or 5.1 semitones, is found in the first row of the second column in Table 4. The difference, 144 Hz. or 14.9 semitones, between the highest and lowest end-points, 305 Hz. of the rising tone and 161 Hz. of the curve tone respectively, is given in the first row of the third column in Table 4. All the other differences in the left half of Table 4 have been obtained in the same way. The right half of Table 4 is derived from Table 2-B-1 and contains the same kind of information as the left half except that the six tones occur in the second syllable position.

The second column of the left half of Table 4 shows that the pitch range of the onset of the six tones in the first syllable varies depending on the environments from 4.8 to 8.4 semitones, the average being 5.9 semitones. This average is slightly greater than the range of 5.1 semitones obtained from the one-syllable utterances. On the other hand, the second column of the right half of Table 4 shows that the same range varies from 3.4 to 5.5 semitones in the second syllable. The average, 4.2 semitones, is smaller by 1.7 semitones than the average of the first syllable. In another female informant's speech, the pitch range of the six tones in the first syllable is 5.0 semitones and that in the second syllable is 4.4 semitones. The difference between these two ranges of 0.6 semitones, considerably smaller than

Table 4
 Difference in F. Between the Highest and Lowest Onset and End-Points of the Six
 Tones in Various Environments
 (in Hz. and Semitones)

Environ	1st Syllable			2nd Syllable		
	Difference at Onset	Difference at End	Environ	Difference at Onset	Difference at End	
- level	59 (5.1)	144 (14.9)	level -	53 (4.0)	215 (22.7)	
- rising	71 (6.2)	155 (16.6)	rising -	61 (4.4)	209 (22.0)	
- broken	95 (8.4)	145 (15.1)	broken -	50 (3.4)	249 (26.4)	
- falling	53 (4.8)	135 (14.1)	falling -	51 (4.3)	190 (19.5)	
- curve	62 (5.6)	135 (13.6)	curve -	41 (3.7)	164 (15.4)	
- drop	65 (5.8)	148 (14.9)	drop -	62 (5.5)	173 (16.6)	
Average	(5.9)	(14.8)	Average	(4.2)	(20.4)	

the 1.7 semitones of the principal informant. Our speculation about the reason for the smaller range at the onset of the six tones in the second syllable is that the target pitch of the end-point of the tone in the first syllable in effect regulates the immediately adjacent onset f_0 value for the following syllable; the onset of a tone in the first syllable lacks such regulating force.

The variation of the pitch ranges of the end f_0 value for the six tones in different syllable positions is much greater (cf. the third columns of each half of Table 4). The difference in the average ranges between the first and second syllables is as great as 5.6 semitones (i.e., $20.4 - 14.8 = 5.6$). The much smaller values in the third column of the left half of Table 4 in comparison to those in the corresponding column in the right half indicate that the onset of the second syllable pulls up or down the extremely high or low end-points of the six tones in the first syllable while there is no such force immediately after the end-points of the six tones in the second syllable.

Is there any regularity in the order of pitch height of the onset and end-points of the six tones? We have not observed any strict consistency in this order (cf. the second syllables of Figure 2-B-1 and the first syllables of Figure 2-B-2) Earlier in this paper, we divided the six tones into two groups, a group of high tones with higher overall pitch and

another of low tones with lower overall pitch. Now the only generalization we can make about the order mentioned above is that the pitches of the onset and end-points of the high tones are higher in general than those of the low tones. The order of the pitch heights of the six tones observed in the analysis of one-syllable utterances is not strictly maintained in various environments.

Another thing to be noted is the unusual height of the pitch ranges of the onset-points of the six tones after level, rising, and broken tones (cf. the second syllables of Figures 2-B-1-a through c). The average of the onset f_0 values for the six tones in these environments is higher by approximately three semitones than that after the other remaining tones. This difference could be taken roughly as the magnitude of the effect of these three high tones on the tones in the second syllable. In all three cases, the onset f_0 values of the six tones are raised by the same amount. This uniform effect of an environment on another is the very reason why the contrast of the six tones is maintained within an environment despite drastic modifications in the phonetic shape of the individual tones caused by the environment.

Conclusion

In this report, we have examined the nature of phonetic variation of Vietnamese tones in two-syllable utterances. All the data provided by the informants have been analyzed by the acoustic phonetic method. Our observations are summarized as follows:

1. The overall pitch height of a tone varies considerably depending upon its tonal environment. The degree of variation depends upon the magnitude of the influencing force, this force being a function of the difference in pitch between the influencing and influenced points. Thus a tone is realized as a high variant in an immediate environment of a high tone (i.e., the level, rising, or broken tone) and as a low variant in an immediate environment of a low tone (i.e., the falling, curve, or drop tone). The degree of variation in the pitch height also depends upon the syllable position. The variation is considerably greater in the second syllable position than the first syllable position. We take this fact as indicating that the progressive effect is greater than the regressive effect.

2. When the onset of a variant of a tone in a given syllable position is higher than that of another variant of the same tone in the same given syllable position, then the end-point of the former is also higher than that of

the latter. This is the very factor that keeps the basic contour of each tone relatively constant in a given syllable position within two-syllable utterances.

3. The variation in the pitch height of a tone is of an asymmetric nature in the sense that, even though the direction of the movement of both onset and end-point of a tone is the same, the absolute amount of variation of the onset of the tone in a given syllable position is not exactly the same as that of the end-point. Usually, the degree of variation is greater at the onset than the end-point, which seems to suggest the relatively greater stability of the end-point or the greater tendency for the end-point target pitch of the tones to be reached.

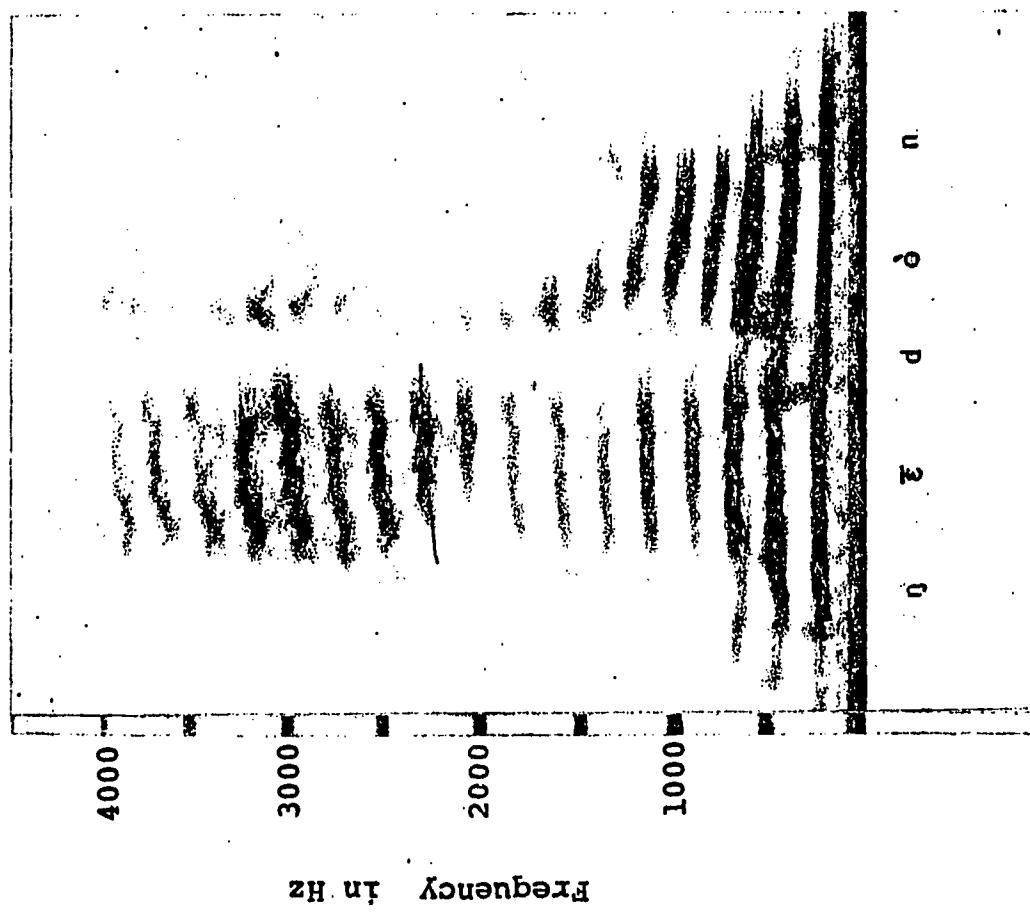
4. Our analysis of two-syllable utterances reveals two interesting phenomena about the falling and curve tones, which were not observed in the analysis of one-syllable utterances. The first is that the most consistent distinctive cue differentiating the level and falling tones is the difference in overall pitch height rather than the falling contour of the falling tone. The second is that the pitch rise at the end of the curve tone is not a very crucial cue of this tone in non-final syllable position. The curve tone in this environment is differentiated from the falling tone primarily by the lower pitch height plus the location of the lowest-pitched point of the curve tone.

5. Such variation of the individual tones as described above, however, does not affect the pattern of the six tone contrast in a given environment. A tone in a given syllable position affects the six tones in the other syllable position in a parallel manner. For example, if the extremely high end-point of a rising tone in the first syllable position pulls up the low onset of the falling tone in the second syllable position, then it would also pull up the onset of the other tones. Because of this phenomenon together with the one mentioned in (2) above, the chance of an overlap between two tones in an identical environment does not increase.

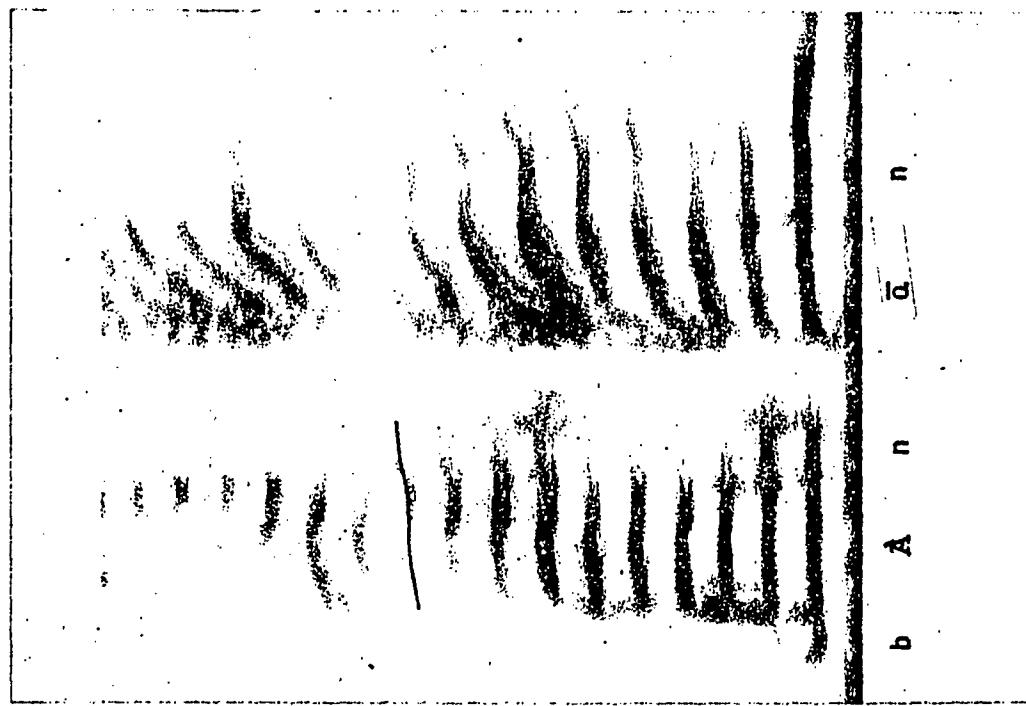
We like to show an interesting case which will make clear some points that we have described in this paper. In (5) above, we mentioned that the phonetic variation of the six tones never leads to a phonetic overlap between any two tones in an identical environment. However, this does not rule out the possibility of an overlap between two tones in two different environments. Indeed we have found a case of such an overlap in the speech of our principal informant. This case involves two two-syllable utterances, the spectrograms of which follow.

On Spectrograms 1 and 2, the tones in the first syllable position are different, but the overall pitch height and the

Spectrogram 1



Spectrogram 2



contour of these tones are hardly distinguishable. The first syllable of /ŋɛ ðən/ 'to hear a rumor' in Spectrogram 1 is in level tone. Even though the contour of this level tone is level, the overall pitch height is unusually low for level tone. This particular level tone has been pulled down by the falling tone in the second syllable which has very low overall pitch height. Furthermore, this utterance token happens to be the last among the four repetitions of the test utterance, and the intonation effect seems to contribute to a further lowering of the overall pitch height of this token. However, the two tones in this utterance were unambiguously and correctly identified by native ear when this utterance was spoken in isolation. On the other hand, the first syllable of /bÀn ān/ 'dining table' in Spectrogram 2 is in the falling tone. But notice that the contour of this falling tone does not show any falling slope at all. (We already described such modification of the falling tone in the first syllable position as this particular case shows). Furthermore, the overall pitch height of the falling tone in Spectrogram 2 is even slightly higher than the level tone in Spectrogram 1. This falling tone has been considerably pulled up by the level tone in the second syllable position. In spite of the modification of the falling tone in its contour and overall pitch height, this utterance is correctly perceived by native speakers when

the two syllables in this utterance are spoken together.

In the above, we showed a case where two different tones overlap physically but still keep their perceptual identities. This fact provides further straight-forward evidence for some assumptions made about linguistic phenomena. First, the pitch levels in tone languages conventionally indicated by the numerals such as 1, 2, 3, etc. are not directly associated with any absolute f_0 values when they are applied to multisyllabic utterances. The two different tones in the first syllable position of Spectrograms 1 and 2 should be represented phonemically in terms of different levels in spite of the complete overlap in f_0 . Second, this case also shows that if the variation, no matter how great it is, is not intended by the speaker but conditioned by the environment, then it does not lead to a confusion in the perception of the uttered tones if the conditioning environment is present. In our example above, the overlap is a result of an unusually great variation of the two tones involved but this physical overlap does not affect the perception of these two tones. In the absence of the second syllables, there is no way to distinguish these two utterances. Such an overlap is a purely accidental phenomenon.

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13. ABSTRACT

This study describes the phonetic variation of the six tones in two-syllable utterances of Vietnamese. The findings are summarized as follows:

1. The overall pitch height of a tone varies considerably depending upon its immediate tonal environment and also its syllable position. In a given syllable position, a variant of a tone adjacent to a high tone is higher than another variant adjacent to a low tone, and the phonetic variation of the tones is greater in the second syllable position than the first syllable position.
2. There is a tendency for any two variants of a tone in a given syllable position not to cross each other. This is a factor that keeps the basic contour of each tone relatively constant.
3. The range of variation of a tone is greater at the onset than at the end-point.
4. Our analysis of two-syllable utterances suggests that the overall pitch height is a more consistent cue than the contour for the differentiation of level tone from the falling tone.
5. In spite of all the intertonal influences, the pattern of the six tone contrast is unaffected in a given environment, due to the uniform effect which the environment exerts on the six tones.

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