

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate position and stylistic variation of (r) in French as spoken by Thai students. Two positions and two styles are chosen: the former are (r) in single word-initial and in postconsonantal (cluster), and the latter are passage-reading and interview. The phonological variable is the French (r) with the voiced uvular fricative [ʁ] as the standard variant.

The subjects are 20 French majors of Department of French, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. Each subject was asked to read a French passage, and took part in a single interview with a native French speaker. All the data were tape-recorded.

The results show that (r) has 12 variants which can be grouped into 5 main ones: [ʁ][r][x][h] and [∅]. The data analysis reveals that there is a significant relationship between position and style and the (r). In reading, [ʁ] is more frequently used in the initial position than in clusters but vice versa in interviews. The frequency of [ʁ] is higher in passage reading than in interviews, regardless of the position. The results also show that [ʁ] always occurs more than 50% in the formal style of passage reading, and less than 40% in the informal style of interview, especially in the initial position where [x] occurs most frequently (52.5%).