The Variations of Burmese Language Based on Age: A Case Study of Burmese Language Used in Shwe Bo District of Myanmar

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Abstracts

This research aimed to: 1) examine age-based variations in the Burmese language used in Shwe Bo District, Myanmar, and 2) analyze these variations. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires from 226 respondents and in-depth interviews with 10 villagers. Quantitative data were analyzed using Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation (S.D.), while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis.

The findings revealed that 100 respondents were male and 126 were female. Most respondents were aged 18–30 (90 individuals, 39.82%), followed by 31–40 years (100 individuals, 44.24%), and over 40 years (36 individuals, 15.92%). For the first objective, participants reported significant challenges with age-based language variations in the Burmese language. The average score was high ($\overline{X}$=3.56, S.D.=0.947). For the second objective, most participants strongly agreed with the analysis of variations, resulting in a very high average score ($\overline{X}$= 4.28, S.D.=0.458).

Keywords: Variations; Burmese Language; Shwe Bo district of Myanmar

Introduction

The Burmese language is one of the primary languages spoken in Myanmar, with around 33 million speakers. This language has been in use for centuries, and it is spoken throughout the country, which is divided into three main regions: the upper, middle, and lower zones. The majority of the Burmese population, particularly in these regions, speaks Burmese as their first language (Indaka, 2020). In Myanmar,

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approximately 70% of the population speaks Burmese as their mother tongue. Additionally, many ethnic minorities learn Burmese as a second language, either in schools or through trade and travel. Outside of Myanmar, Burmese-speaking communities can be found in countries such as Thailand and Bangladesh, with many individuals being refugees who fled persecution.

Phonologically, Burmese has 34 consonant phonemes, with contrasts between voiced, voiceless, and voiceless aspirated sounds in stops and affricates. There is also a two-way voicing contrast in nasals and most approximants except for the /j/ sound. Some specific phonetic notes include: 1) The character (သ), which in some contexts is transliterated as (s), but in modern Standard Burmese (MSB) is often pronounced closer to /h~t/ with a dental flap, sometimes with aspiration or a slight dental fricative. 2) The /sh/ sound, historically derived from /tʃh/ and /tsh/, is less aspirated but pronounced with a breathy quality. 3) The /j/ sound, especially at the beginning of words, is often pronounced as [ʝ]. 4) The /ʍ/ sound is rare in modern Burmese except in foreign loanwords.

While this phonetic analysis accurately describes Burmese from a purely phonetic standpoint, it does not fully capture the language's historical vowel developments and the rationale behind Burmese orthography. The Burmese script consists of 33 main characters, which is roughly equivalent to the 26 letters of the English alphabet. Unlike English, where words are formed by combining consonants and vowels (A, E, I, O, U), the Burmese writing system includes additional symbols for vowel shifts, tone changes, and consonant modifications.

Resilience, in the context of language and culture, refers to the ability of individuals to adapt and thrive despite challenges. Studies have shown that resilient individuals tend to be optimistic, flexible, and proactive, and their resilience is influenced both by intrinsic factors (such as personality traits) and extrinsic factors (such as social support and spirituality). In Myanmar, intrinsic factors influencing resilience in language use include age-related variations in the Burmese language. For example, optimism has been identified as a predictor of resilience, especially in university students (Dawson & Pooley, 2013). Other factors, such as goal setting, self-confidence, and emotional regulation, play key roles in building resilience (McIntosh & Shaw, 2017; Zellner, 1970).

The purpose of this study is to examine age-related variations in the use of the Burmese language in Shwe Bo District, a region in Myanmar known for its

traditional Burmese-speaking population. Myanmar is divided into seven states (Shan, Karen, Kayar, Mon, Rakhine, Chin, and Kachin) and seven divisions (Tanintharyi, Yangon, Bago, Ayeyarwady, Magwe, Mandalay, and Sagaing). Shwe Bo District, located in the Sagaing Division, is particularly significant for its historical role in the development and preservation of the Burmese language. This research aims to investigate the linguistic variations based on age in this district, providing valuable insights for linguists and those interested in the Burmese dialect. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of Burmese language variations and offer a foundation for further linguistic research on the subject.

Research Objectives

1. To study the variations of Burmese language based on age used in Shwe Bo district of Myanmar.

2. To analyze the variations of Burmese language based on age used in Shwe Bo district of Myanmar.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

This section describes the target population from which the sample will be drawn. It specifies the characteristics of the population, such as age, gender, location, or any other relevant factors. The sample refers to a subset of the population selected for participation in the study. It explains the sampling method (e.g., random sampling, purposive sampling) and the criteria used to select the sample size, ensuring it is representative of the population.

Research Instruments

This section outlines the tools and instruments used for data collection. These may include surveys, interviews, questionnaires, observation checklists, or other measurement tools. It is important to describe how each instrument is designed, its reliability and validity, and how it will be used to gather data from participants.

Data Collection

This section explains the process of collecting data, including how and when data will be gathered. It covers the steps taken to ensure ethical considerations, such

as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant rights. The data collection method could involve face-to-face interviews, online surveys, or other relevant techniques.

Data Analysis Statistics

This section describes the statistical methods that will be used to analyze the data. It outlines the specific techniques employed, such as descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode), inferential statistics (t-tests, chi-square tests, ANOVA), or other relevant methods. This section also explains how these statistics will help in interpreting the research findings and testing the study's hypotheses.

Results

According to the research questionnaire, there are several factors that Variations of Burmese language based on age: case study of Burmese language used in Shwe Bo district of Myanmar. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The Gender of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years old	90	39.82%
31-40 years old	100	44.24%
Over 40 years old	36	15.92%
Total	**226**	**100.00%**

Table 1 The Gender of the Respondents

The table illustrates the age of respondents divided into 3 groups: 18-30 years old, 31-40 years old, and over 40 years old. The majority of the respondents, 90 (39.82%), were aged 18-30 years old. 100 respondents (44.24%) were 31-40 years old, and over 40 years of respondents were 36 (15.92). The total number of respondents was 226 (100.0) in this study in the Shaw Bo District of Myanmar.

2. Results of Study Variations of the Lexical Burmese Language Used in Shwe Bo District of Myanmar

This section contains the patterns of respondents who live in the Shaw Bo District of Myanmar. By analyzing statistics, there are adversities to studying variations

of the lexical Burmese language used in the Shwe Bo District of Myanmar. The findings can be summarized as follows:

			Statement 1					
		1. It's the "tree'. သစ်ပင် thi' pin/ /θiʔ pĩ/ အပင် /apin / /əpĩ/						
			Level of opinion					
GP	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean	S. D.
			Frequency and percentage			Moderate level		
G1	109 48.23%	100 44.24%	12 5.30%	5 2.21%	0 00.00%	100%	2.56	.967
G2	121 53.53%	89 39.38	11 4.86%	5 2.21%	0 00.00%	100%	2.48	.958
G3	91 40.26%	125 55.30%	7 3.09%	3 1.32%	0 00.00%	100%	2.56	.977

Table 2 Stabement. 1

According to statement 1, showed the level of the opinion of the respondents. The researcher demonstrates those who live in the Shaw Bo district respondents about difficulties for them to called It's the "tree'. သစ်ပင် **thi' pin/ /θiʔ pĩ/ အပင် /apin / /əpĩ/**. Group (1), It is stated that 12 (5.30%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 100 (44.24%) of respondents agreed with it. 91 (40.26%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject more difficulties than other subjects, and 5 (2.21%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 2.56 and (S.D.=967). Group (2), It is stated that 11 (4.86%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 125 (55.30%) of respondents agreed with it. 121 (53.53%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject more difficulties than other subjects, and 5 (2.21%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 2.48 and (S.D.=958). Group (3), It is stated that 7 (3.09%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 89 (39.38%) of respondents agreed with it. 121 (53.53%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject

more difficulties than other subjects, and 3 (1.32%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 2.56 and (S.D.=977).

Statement 2							
2. Call the 'wall, brick wall'. **တံတိုင်း /dədáĩ/ နံရံ /nã̃ yã̃/ အုတ်ရိုး /oʊʔ yó/**							
Level of opinion							
GP	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean	S. D.
Frequency and percentage						Moderate level	
G2	150 66.37%	68 30.08%	6 2.65%	2 0.88%	0 00.00%	100%	3.56	.998
G1	142 62.83%	78 34.51%	5 2.21%	1 0.44%	0 00.00%	100%	2.58	.988
G3	121 53.53%	89 39.38	11 4.86%	5 2.21%	0 00.00%	100%	3.56	.977

Table 3 Stabement. 2

According to statement 2, showed the level of the opinion of the respondents. The researcher demonstrates those who live in the Shaw Bo district respondents about difficulties them to called It's "Call the 'wall, brick wall'. တံတိုင်း /dədáĩ/ နံရံ /nã̃ yã̃/ အုတ်ရိုး /oʊʔ yó/". Group (1), It is stated that 6 (2.65%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 68 (30.08%) of respondents agreed with it. 150 (66.37%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject more difficulties than other subjects, and 2 (0.88%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 3.56 and (S.D.=998). Group (2), It is stated that 5 (2.21%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 78 (34.51%) of respondents agreed with it. 142 (62.83%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject more difficulties than other subjects, and 5 (2.21%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 2.58 and (S.D.=988). Group (3), It is stated that 11 (4.86%) of respondents were neutral with variations of the lexical subject which is more than other subjects. 89 (39.38%) of respondents agreed with

it. 121 (53.53%) of respondents strongly agreed with variations of the lexical subject more difficulties than other subjects, and 2 (2.21%) of respondents disagreed with it. This statement one considered the moderate level mean score of 3.56 and (S.D.=977).

Statement 3							
3. I say 'sunrise'. နေ့ထွက် /nèi tʰweʔ/ အရှင်တက် /à yòʊ̃ teʔ/							
Level of opinion							
GP	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean	S. D.
Frequency and percentage						Moderate level	
G1	121 53.53%	89 39.38%	11 4.86%	5 2.21%	0 00.00%	100%	2.48	.958
G2	142 62.83%	78 34.51%	5 2.21%	1 0.44%	0 00.00%	100%	2.56	.977
G3	105 46.46%	98 43.36%	20 7.51%	3 1.32%	0 00.00%	100%	2.58	.986

Table 4 Stabement. 3

According to the findings in statement 3, indicated the respondents' levels of opinion. According to the data (Group 1), 89 (39.38%) of the respondents agreed with the designation "I say 'sunrise'. နေ့ထွက် /nèi tʰweʔ/ အရှင်တက် /à yòʊ̃ teʔ/". Additionally, 121 (53.53%) strongly agreed with it, while 5 (2.21%) disagreed with the statement regarding the study of variations in lexical Burmese. The remaining 11 (4.86%) respondents were neutral on this matter. The average result indicated a mean of 2.48, with a standard deviation of 0.958. Overall, the respondents' opinions fell within the moderate range for this second statement. According to the data (Group 2), 78 (34.51%) of the respondents agreed with the designation "I say 'sunrise'. နေ့ထွက် /nèi tʰweʔ/ အရှင်တက် /à yòʊ̃ teʔ/". Additionally, 124 (62.83%) strongly agreed with it, while 1 (0.44%) disagreed with the statement regarding the study of variations in lexical Burmese. The remaining 5 (2.21%) respondents were neutral on this matter. The average result indicated a mean of 2.56, with a standard deviation of .977. Overall, the respondents' opinions fell within the moderate range for this second statement. According to the data (Group 3), 98 (43.36%) of the respondents agreed with the

designation "I say 'sunrise'. နေထွက် /nèi tʰweʔ/ အရုဏ်တက် /à yò̃ teʔ/". Additionally, 105 (46.46%) strongly agreed with it, while 3 (1.32%) disagreed with the statement regarding the study of variations in lexical Burmese. The remaining 20 (7.51%) respondents were neutral on this matter. The average result indicated a mean of 2.58, with a standard deviation of 0.986. Overall, the respondents' opinions fell within the moderate range for this second statement.

Statement 4							
4. I say 'rotate'. လှည့် /l̥ḛ/							
Level of opinion							
GP	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean	S. D.
Frequency and percentage						Moderate level	
G1	43 19.02%	175 77.43%	6 2.65%	2 0.88%	0 00.00%	100%	2.98	.758
G2	160 70.79%	56 24.22%	7 3.09%	3 1.22%	0 00.00%	100%	2.86	.870
G3	23 10.22%	189 83.62%	12 5.30%	2 0.88%	0 00.00%	100%	2.96	.887

Table 5 Stabement. 4

As per the results presented in statement 5, according to (Group 2), 175 (77.43%) of respondents agree with the term "I say 'rotate'. လှည့် /l̥ḛ/", and taking notes. Moreover, 43 (19.02%) of respondents strongly agree with it. On the flip side, 6 (2.65%) were neutral, and 2 (0.88%) disagreed with this statement. The mean score was 2.98, with a standard deviation (S.D.) of 758. The remaining opinions were at a low level. According to (Group 1), 56 (24.22%) of respondents agree with the term "I say 'rotate'. လှည့် /l̥ḛ/", and taking notes. Moreover, 160 (70.79%) of respondents strongly agree with it. On the flip side, 7 (3.09%) were neutral, and 3 (1.22%) disagreed with this statement. The mean score was 2.86, with a standard deviation (S.D.) of 870. The remaining opinions were at a low level. According to (Group 3), 189 (83.62%) of respondents agree with the term "I say 'rotate'. လှည့် /l̥ḛ/", and taking notes. Moreover, 23 (10.22%) of respondents strongly agree with it. On the flip side, 12 (5.30%) were neutral, and 2 (0.88%) disagreed with this statement. The mean score

was 2.96, with a standard deviation (S.D.) of 887. The remaining opinions were at a low level.

The analysis of questionnaire data reveals two main findings related to Variations of the Lexical Burmese Language Used in Shwe Bo District of Myanmar. Conversely, the findings on difficulties in variations of the lexical Burmese language used demonstrate that several challenges persist. Most notably, students struggle with expressing ideas in variations of the lexical Burmese language, hesitating to speak, lacking vocabulary, and feeling shy or anxious when speaking. These difficulties are reflected in lower average scores on corresponding items. Overall, the analysis showcases respondents' proficiency in communication but also underscores specific areas where they encounter hurdles.

Discussion

The study examines variations in the Burmese language spoken in the Shwe Bo district of Myanmar, using both qualitative and quantitative methods with 226 respondents. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews, while quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods like Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation. The study finds that younger generations in central Shwe Bo tend to adopt the central Burmese dialect to blend in, which could threaten the preservation of the traditional Shwe Bo dialect. The researcher warns of a potential linguistic crisis unless efforts are made to preserve the local language.

The study also explores whether variations in syntax structure increase through discourse analysis, noting significant cultural changes in the region. The findings contribute to dialectology and language change theories. Additionally, there was no significant relationship between respondents' GPA or learning styles and their academic performance, agreeing with prior research that academic performance is not affected by these factors. Lastly, the study highlights the cultural and linguistic exchanges along the border of Shwe Bo with neighboring regions, which influence the dialect and lexicon.

New Knowledge

To state the new body of knowledge, it is appropriate for revealing three key points. First, understanding the local essence is one major knowledge for this case.

Why? Because there were a lot of different pronunciation styles, for example, the word rotation, it had distinctive features among them. Second, age is a considerable matter of Burmese language. Since there was a gap of age, the words that people used also different in many cases. Third, the Burmese language that used in Show Bo district has difference pronunciation, meanings in comparing with other parts of the country. Overall, the fresh mastery from the study were inconsistent by the age and community matter.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study investigates the variations in the Burmese language spoken in the Shwe Bo district of Myanmar, focusing on lexical differences. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research surveyed 226 respondents and interviewed 10 key informants. Data were analyzed through content analysis for qualitative data and statistical methods (Percentage, Frequency, Mean, Standard Deviation) using SPSS for quantitative data.

The study found that respondents reported varying levels of difficulty with different lexical variations of the word for "tree" (သစ်ပင် thi' pin/ /θiʔ pĩ/ อปิ่น /apin / /əpĩ/). In Group 1, 40.26% strongly agreed that lexical variations caused difficulties, while 44.24% agreed. Group 2 showed similar results, with 55.30% agreeing and 53.53% strongly agreeing. Group 3 had 53.53% strongly agreeing, with the majority noting that lexical variations caused more difficulty than other language issues.

In conclusion, the study highlights the impact of age on language variations in the Shwe Bo district and suggests that further exploration of these variations could enhance language preservation efforts. The research emphasizes the importance of examining lexical changes, language attitudes, dialectal differences, and the role of language in different contexts like family, community, and religious events. Future research could expand on these areas and improve language curricula and preservation programs.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Including suggestions for further research, such as identifying unanswered questions or emerging trends, would encourage further exploration. The researcher hopes this study can be a reference and a little inspiration for developing other

research related to the variation of the Burmese language used in the Shwe Bo district of Myanmar. Therefore, further study can present the following area and further studies are focused on what will be studied for;..

   1. A study of difficulty in variations of Burmese language based on age: case study of Burmese language used in Shwe Bo district of Myanmar

   2. Developing the phobias in variations of the lexical Burmese language in the Shwe Bo District of Myanmar.

   3. Dynamic variations in the spoken Burmese language: an in-depth analysis of linguistic diversity in the Shwe Bo district of Myanmar.

   4. Investigate and document the lexical variations present in the spoken Burmese language among the diverse communities within the Shwe Bo district.

   5. Unraveling the tapestry of linguistic diversity: variations in the Burmese language across communities in the Shwe Bo district, Myanmar.

  This set of research objectives aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of variations in the Burmese language within the Shwe Bo district, covering linguistic, cultural, and historical dimensions.

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