An Analytical Study of Burmese Kinship Terms
in Danubyu Township, Myanmar[*]

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Abstracts

The Burmese kinship terms can be divided into native kinship terms and foreign kinship terms depending on the source, and can also be divided into civil kinship terms and royal kinship terms depending on the users. Burmese kinship terms have different degrees of distinction in the following six dimensions: paternal and maternal, age, sex, linearity and collateral, consanguinity, affinity, users, and occasions of use. The unique rules for using Burmese kinship terms reflect the Burmese concept of distinctions between superiority and inferiority, seniors and juniors, intimacy, and estrangement. Furthermore, Burmese kinship terms reflect the form of marriage that the Burmese have experienced and also reflect the ethnic cognitive orientation of Burmese in terms of the familiarity of experience, cognitive distance, and metaphorical thinking.

Keywords : Kinship terms; Burmese language; Culture; Dialect

Introduction

Burmese is the official language of Myanmar (since 1989, the name for Burma) where it is spoken by 48 million people. It is also the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia, bounded by Bangladesh and India on the northwest, China on the north and northeast, and Laos and Thailand on the east (John Okell, 2002 : 9). It is the seat of the Danubyu Township in the Maubin District by perhaps population, 105,420 people. It is closely related to Danubyu Burmese of Myanmar. Therefore, the Danubyu Burmese dialect in this area may

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have been settled here for a long time. Though their communities are among village, which people speak Burmese language, they still communicate by using their mother tongue in their daily lives (Myint Soe, 1999 : 19).

Burmese belongs to the Burmish branch of the Burmese-Lolo (or Lolo- Burmese) subgroup of the South-Eastern branch of the Tibeto-Burman family (Nicoletta Romeo, **"Aspect in Burmese. meaning and function"** (John Benjamins, 2008 : 5). The standard variety is spoken in Mandalay Burmese, Yangon Burmese, Ayeyarwady Burmese, Chindwin Burmese, while distinct dialects include Arakanese in the west (2.8 million speakers), Tavoyan (400,000) and Beik (250,000) in the south-east, east central Intha (90,000), Danu (100,000) and Taungyo (40,000), and west central Yaw (20,000) (Bradley, D. (ed)., 1997 : 41). As for Danubyu Burmese is spoken in the Ayeyarwady Division of south-west Myanmar, located on the west bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta.

The researchers this purpose is to analyze Burmese kinship systems. The Burmese kinship system has many of the kinship terms used in Burmese today which is extant or derived from Old Burmese (Jenny, Mathias., 2015 : 4-6). These include the terms used to reference siblings and in-lows. The material concerning the Burmese kinship terms is a fairly complex system used to define the family in the Burmese language, as it is manifested' in the township of Danubyu Burma. In and near the urban centers, where the secularizing influences of the South-West have permeated the indigenous custom to a greater extent, practice is likely to diverge from ideal pattens much more than in the small, homogenous village communities. Our concern here is with the social life of the ordinary peasantry of Danubyu Burma. It is hoped that these data may contribute in some measures to a very scant and fragmentary knowledge of modern Burmese culture (Mi Mi Khaing, in Macmillan & Co., Landon, 1049-50 : 104.). In the Burmese kinship systems as follows: (Burling, Robbins, 1965 : 106-117)

1) Maternal and parental lineages are not distinguished, except for members of the parents' generations.

2) Relative age of a sibling relation is considered.

3) Gender of the relative is distinguished.

4) Generation from ego is indicated.

The basic consanguineal and affinal kinship terms are shown in Fingers 1, 2, and 3. The kinship terms, corresponding to the numbers shown on the diagrams, are as follows: (W. S. Corny, 1944 : 201)

a) Mother /amei/əmèi/, b). Father /ahpei/əpʰèi/, and c). Pharji: Parent's elder brother; parent's elder sister's husband.

The researcher chose to analyze Burmese dialect in Danubyu Township for the past research results. The researcher finds out the kinship terms of the Burmese dialect in Danubyu Township as the data collection place. So, it is necessary to study, research and collect information in all aspects. For this reason, the researcher is interested in studying Burmese kinship terms in Danubyu Township for collecting information about kinship systems as part of the language and culture of ethnic groups.

However, we have not found the study results that systematically discuss the social-cultural, and ethnic cognition behind the semantic system of Burmese kinship terms as well as the rules of using Burmese kinship terms. The theory of experience familiarity and cognitive distance believes that all of our perceptions are based on our physical experience, and the more we experience certain social facts, the more details we can know about them (Shu, H., G. Edwards & C. Qi., 2013 : 290-296). Simultaneously, in the process of forming our perception of the outside world, conceptual metaphor and metonymy serve as important cognitive means and thinking methods (Tang, Q-H. & W-C. Rama., 2019 : 118-123). Therefore, studying Burmese kinship terms not only helps us to explore the social culture of the Burma people but also helps us to further understand the ethnic cognitive orientation of the Burma people.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the Burmese Kinship Terms in Danubyu Township.

2. To analyze the type and function of Burmese Kinship Terms in Danubyu Township.

3. To find out the characteristics of Burmese Kinship Terms from the Culture in Danubyu Township.

Research Methodology

This research is a documentary research method. The researcher revised the principle, theory, and literature concerning the analysis of Burmese kinship systems in Danubyu Township. The research tools used to collect data consist of kinship systems think tanks and video and voice recordings. Also, the researcher prepared a convenient form for recording kinship data by creating a family genealogy for analytical convenience. The research tools used to collect data consist of kinship systems think tanks and video and

voice recordings. Also, the researcher prepared a convenient form for recording kinship data by creating a family genealogy for analytical convenience. Then, the researcher studied from A Burmese – English Dictionary, the Myanmar Dictionary, and the modern usage of Burmese books, academic books, thesis, documentaries, articles, and journals. After receiving the words from the local Burmese relatives, the researcher analyzed the data by using the componential analysis method.

Results

1. The Results of the Analysis of the Categorization of Danubyu Burmese Kinship Terms

Danubyu Burmese kinship terms are a complicated system, which can be divided into different categories according to different standards.

According to the source, it can be divided into native language kinship terms and foreign language kinship terms. Native language kinship terms refer to a set of inherent kinship terms formed with the continuous development and improvement of Burmese language. They are the main and core part of the Burmese kinship term system. Foreign language kinship terms refer to kinship terms borrowed from other ethnic languages when Burma ethnic group is in the course of interaction with other ethnic groups. Foreign language kinship terms in Burmese are mainly borrowed from Pali-Sanskrit and other language.

According to the users of Burmese kinship terms, many of the kinship terms used in Burmese today are extant or derived from Old Burmese. These include the terms used to reference siblings and in-laws. they can be divided into common kinship terms and royal kinship terms. Common kinship terms are kinship terms that can be used by all Danubyu Burma people. Royal kinship terms refer to the kinship terms that are only allowed to be used by members of the Burma royal family.

The Danubyu Burmese kinship system identifies and recognizes six generations of direct ancestors, excluding the ego and the Burmese kinship system identifies seven generations of direct descendants, excluding the ego:

Table: 1. Grades of kinship terms from the Pali-Sanskrit

Kindship	Meaning	Kinship	Meaning
bo:/bɔ́/	great-grandfather's great-grandfather (7 generations removed)	tha:/θá/	(1 generation removed)

be:/bé/	great-grandfather's great-grandfather (6 generations removed)	mjei:/myéi/	(2 generations removed)
bin:/bĩ/	great-grandfather's grandfather (5 generations removed)	mji'/myiʔ/	(3 generations removed)
bi:/bì/	great-grandfather's father (4 generations removed)	ti:/tì/	(4 generations removed)
bei:/béi/	great-grandfather (3 generations removed)	tu'/tuʔ/	(5 generations removed)
bou:/bó/	grandfather (2 generations removed)	kju'/ʧuʔ/	(6 generations removed)
ba:/bà/	father (1 generation removed)	hse'/sʰeʔ/	(7 generations removed)

Table: 2. Royal kinship terms in Danubyu Burmese

Kinship	Meaning	Kinship	Meaning
ahpou:/əpʰó/	paternal grandfather	ahpou:/əpʰó/	paternal grandfather
ahpwa:/əpʰwá/	paternal grandmother	ahpwa:/əpʰwá/	maternal grandmother
ahpei:/əpʰèi/	father	amei:/əmèi/	mother
ba. gji:/ba̠ ʤí/	uncle (father's brother)	ba. gji:ba̠ ʤí	uncle (mother's brother)
ado:/ədɔ̀/	aunt (father's sister)	ado:/ədɔ̀/	aunt (mother's sister
akou:/əkò/	elder brother	ama:/əma̠/	elder sister
nji:/ɲì/	younger brother	nji (nja̠) ma:/ɲì (ɲə) ma̠/	younger sister
tha:/θá/	son	thamiz;/θamí/	daughter
lin:/lĩ/	husband	maja:/mayá/	wife
tu a̠ji:/tù əyí/	relationship between uncle or aunt and nephew or niece	kha̠mi: kha̠me: /kʰəmí kʰəmeʔ/	relationship between parents of a married couple
maja: nji akou:/mayá ɲì əkò/	relationship between the husbands of two sisters	thami: mjau' tha:/θamí myaʊʔ θá/	cousin; relationship between daughters of brothers and sons of sisters.

The Burmese kinship system also recognizes various relationships between family members including:

Table: 3. Common kinship terms in Danubyu Burmese

Kinship	Meaning	Kinship	Meaning
jau' khama. jau' kjadhu:/yaʊʔ kʰamḁ yaʊʔ ʧaðù/	father-in-law (husband's father)	jau' khama. mein: madhu:/yaʊʔ kʰamḁ meiĩ̃ maðù/	mother-in-law (husband's mother)
ba. gji:/bḁ ʤí/	uncle (father's or mother's elder brother)	ba. dwei:/bḁ dwéi/	uncle (father's or mother's younger brother)
u: gji:/ú ʤí/ u: lei:/ú léi/	uncle (father's or mother's elder sister's husband)	u: gji:/ú ʤí/ u: lei:/ú léi/	uncle (father's younger sister's husband)
dweido:/dwéi dɔ̀/, dogji:/dɔ̀ ʤí/, dodo:/dɔ̀ dɔ̀/, gjido:/ʤí dɔ̀/	aunt (father's or mother's elder sister)	ado:/ədɔ̀/, dwei: lei:/dwéi léi/, dolei:/dɔ̀ léi/	aunt (father's or mother's younger sister)
ahpoulei:/əpʰó léi/	grand uncle (an uncle of one's father or mother)	ahpwa: lei:/əpʰwá léi/	grand aunt (the aunt of one's father or mother)
tu:/tù/	nephew (sibling's son)	tu ma:/tù mḁ/	niece (sibling's daughter)
khe ma:/kʰè mḁ/ (or) maji:/mayí/	sister-in-law (elder brother's wife, elder cousin's wife, husband's elder sister, wife's elder sister)	khe ma:/kʰè mḁ/ (or) maji:/mayí/	sister-in-law (younger brother's wife, younger cousin's wife, husband's younger sister, wife's younger sister)
jau' hpa:/yaʊʔ pʰḁ/	brother-in-law (sister's husband husband's younger brother	khe: ou:/kʰé ò/	brother-in-law (elder sister's husband (female ego)

	wife's brother)		Husband's elder brother)
mat':/maʔ/	drother-in-law (younger sister's husband (female ego) husband's younger brother)	/thami: jau' khama/ /θamí yaʊʔ kʰamą/	describing the relation between parents-in-law and their son / daughter-in-law
thame':/θameʔ/	son-in-law (daughter's husband)	tu:/tù/	son-in-law (niece's husband)
chwei: ma:/ʧʰwéi mą/	daughter-in-law (son's wife)	tu ma:/tù mą/	daughter-in-law (nephew's wife)
yaukhka.hti:/jaʊʔkʰətʰí/	father-in-law (spouse's father)	yaukhka.ma:/jaʊʔkʰəmą/	mother-in-law (spouse's mother)

2. The Factures of Danubyu Burmese Kinship Terms

Through the analysis of Danubyu Burmese kin terms in Tables 1-3, the researcher found that Burmese kin terms have many unique characteristics. And researcher will summarize the characteristics of Burmese kinship terms from the following six aspects: paternal and maternal, age, gender, linearity and collateral, consanguinity and affinity, and users and occasions of use.

2.1 Paternal and Maternal Distinctions are Not Strict

In terms of Danubyu Burmese kinship, paternal and maternal distinctions are different across generations. The paternal and maternal lines are strictly distinguished in the generations of great-grandparents and grandparents. In the parental generation, apart from the elder brother and the elder sister of the father and the mother who does not distinguish between paternal and maternal lines, the others are strictly distinguished between paternal and maternal lines.

2.2 There are Different Distinctions Between Older and Younger Members in the Same Generation

No distinction is made between the eldest and youngest in the generation of great-grandfathers and grandfathers. Among the generation of parents, there is a strict age distinction based on parents: people older than parents and younger than parents have different designations. Among the ego generation, people older than ego and younger than ego have different names. And no distinction is made between the generations of sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

2.3 Gender Distinction is Not Strict

The Danubyu kinship terms in the generations of great-grandfather and grandfather have a strict gender distinction. However, there is no gender distinction in consanguinity kinship terms in the generations of ego, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. In these, generations, when it is necessary to specify a gender, the speaker only needs to add the word /jau' kja:/ /jaʊʔ ʧá/ 'male' or /mein: ma/ /meiĩ ma/ 'female' after the corresponding kinship terms.

However, in the parental generation, apart from the father and mother's younger brother and younger sister who does not distinguish between genders, the rest are strictly distinguished in terms of gender. In addition, all affinity kinship terms in every generation have a strict gender distinction.

2.4 The Distinction Between the Lineal and the Collateral is Not Strict

In Danubyu kinship terms of Burmese, except for the children's generation where there is a strict distinction between the lineal and the collateral, the other generations have no distinction between the lineal and the collateral.

2.5 The Distinction Between Consanguinity and Affinity is Not Strict

There is no distinction between consanguinity and affinity in the generations of great-grandfather and grandfather. But consanguinity and affinity are distinguished in other generations. For most of the affinity kinship terms of the Burmese language, the word /jau' kja:/ /jaʊʔ ʧá/ is added after the corresponding male consanguinity kinship terms to address male affinity, and the word /kja: /ʧá/ /ma.ma/ is added after the corresponding female consanguinity kinship terms to address female affinity. Only the parents of one's spouse have special appellations. The husband's father is called yaukhka.hti:/ /jaʊʔkʰətʰí/ /yaʊʔ kʰamḁ yaʊʔ ʧaðʉ̀/, the husband's mother is called yaukhka.ma:/jaʊʔkʰəma/, and the wife's

father is called yaukhka. hti:/ /jaʊʔkʰətʰi/ /yaʊʔ kʰama yaʊʔ ʧaðὺ/, the wife's mother is called yaukhka.ma:/jaʊʔkʰəma/.

3. Rules of Using Danubyu Burmese Kinship Terms

Every kinship term in Danubyu Burmese has its fixed meaning. Therefore, we need to analyze the rules of using Burmese kinship terms in addition to analyzing its system and characteristics. By investigating the specific use of Burmese kinship terms, the researcher found that the current use of Burmese kinship terms mainly has the following rules:

3.1 Use of Kinship Terms Based on Generation and Age

For elders or people who are of the same generation as we are but older than ourselves, kinship terms will be used to directly refer to them. However, for younger generations or people who are of the same generation as we are but younger than ourselves, their names or nicknames are generally used to refer to them directly. For example, children call their father ahpei:/əpʰèi/ and call their mother amei:/əmèi/, while parents usually call their children by using their names or nicknames.

3.2 The Use of Burmese Kinship Terms Has Differences Between Direct Address and Indirect Address

The use of Burmese kinship terms has differences between direct address and indirect address in communication. According to the different communication occasions and different communication objects, the use of Burmese kinship terms is different. For younger generations or people who are of the same generation as we are but younger than us, in the direct address, we often use their names to address them; while in the indirect address, we often use kinship terms to address them. However, for elders or people who are of the same generation as we are but older than us, either direct address or indirect address, we often use kinship terms to address (or refer to) them.

3.2.1 Using Kinship Terms To Address Non-Relatives

In Burmese society, people often get used to using kinship terms to refer to people who have no kinship with them, such as using **ahpou:/əpʰó/** 'grandfather' to address male non-relatives who are of similar age to their grandfather, or using **ba:/bà/**to address male or female non-relatives who are older than them.

3.2.2 Using Asymmetric Kinship Terms to Address Non-Relatives

Another special generalized use of kinship terms in Burmese is the use of asymmetric kinship terms to address non-relatives. For example, parents address children older than their children (non-relative relationships) as **akou:/əkò/** 'older brother or older sister', and address the children younger than their children (non-relative relationships) as **ama:/əmḁ/** 'younger brother or younger sister', and so on.

Vocabulary is a symbolic concept. Any vocabulary expresses a concept already formed in our brain. Intergenerational differences in Burmese kinship terms reflect experience and familiarity in Burmese cognition. Through the analysis of Burmese kinship terms, we can see that Burmese kinship terms exhibit the most detailed distinction among parental kinship terms (see Table 1-3 for details). Indeed, in daily life, from childhood to adulthood, the relatives that people contact most often are relatives of their parents' generation. When people have frequent contact with the parents of the parents' generation, they have formed a multi-perspective cognition of them, and they are well aware of the subtle differences between them. These cognitions are reflected in language by referring to them using different related terms.

Relatives of other generations lack cognition due to lack of experience so Burmese people do not distinguish between them much. For example, relatives of people's great-grandfathers and above generations, in reality, due to the limitation of a life cycle, hardly come into contact with them. Some of their cognition is obtained through the narration of relatives or written records such as genealogy. Therefore, people often know very little about them. At present, in Burma, relatives of the great-grandfather and above generations are usually addressed only using the kinship term **ahpou:/əpʰó/**. In the Burmese language, **ahpou:/əpʰó/** has the meaning of forebear or ancestor. From the use of this kinship term, we can see that Burmese people's cognition of great-grandfathers and above generations is very vague. Another example is a relatively special phenomenon in Burmese, namely **tu ḁji:/tù əyí/**, which is used to refer to the nephew, niece, grandson, and granddaughter. Many language researchers have noticed this phenomenon. This is also a more common phenomenon in the entire Burmese language. But for this phenomenon, language researchers have not yet given an explanation that is acceptable to many parties. We believe that the emergence of the use of this kinship term reflects Burmese people's

cognition of mental distance orientation for kinship. In Burmese people's cognition, relatives of their own children, whether they are nephews, nieces, or grandchildren, all have a further relationship with them. Although they belong to different generations, there is no difference in the mental cognitive distance, so they use the same kinship term to address.

In addition, it can be seen from table 1-3 that among Burmese kinship terms, the kinship terms for relatives of the parents' generation is the largest in number and most complicated. When researcher take parental generation as the center, up as the generations increase and down as the generations decrease, the number of kinship terms in every generation is gradually decreasing. This fully reflects the experience of familiarity and cognitive distance orientation in Burmese people's cognition.

Conclusion

The history of a language is a vital part of our everyday lives. We use language to communicate with others, whether this be in the form of speech, writing, or gestures. It is often highly structured and complex, following specific grammar rules and social conventions. The Burmese language, as a language used in real life, is actually the result of the long-term development of Burmese society. It retains traces of social evolution at different periods of history. Through the analysis of Burmese kinship terms, the researcher can see that the language is not a mere symbol, but the product of national cognition, accumulation, and refractions of national culture. As an important part of the Burmese language, Burmese kinship terms are one of the important marks of the history and culture of Burmese society, which reflect the national cognitive orientation of the Burmese people and their development background. culture from antiquity to the present day. Through the study of Burmese kinship terms, on the one hand, we come to understand the national cognitive orientation of the Burmese people; on the other hand, it also provides us with a linguistic perspective to know the development of Burmese society.

Discussion

Metaphors and metonymies are important daily cognitive means and thinking methods. When people are performing cognition and reasoning, they often use metaphor or metonymy as a cognitive means. Through metaphor or metonymy, on the one hand, people

can turn abstraction into concreteness, unfamiliarity into familiarity, complexity into conciseness, etc.; on the other hand, they can express some emotional cognition.

As a product of national cognition, any language, and its verbal expressions contain a lot of metaphorical thinking and metaphorical and metonymic expressions. Burmese kind of metaphorical thinking and metaphorical and metonymic expression also exists in the system of Burmese kinship terms.

First of all, in Burmese kinship terms, the essence of using ahpou:/əpʰóʊ/ to refer to the relatives of the great-grandparents and above generations is a kind of metonymy, using the feature of old age to metonymize kinship. In addition to concisely referring to kinship, this metonymy also expresses people's respectful and awe-inspiring emotional cognition to the predecessors of the family.

Secondly, in contemporary Burmese society, people often like to use asymmetrical kinship terms to address people who have a certain relationship with them. For instance, when a mother speaks to her child, she addresses her husband lin:/lĩ/ 'dad', and addresses her brother u: lei:/ú léi/ 'uncle'; parents address the children who are older than their own children (non-relative relationships) as u: gji:/ú dʒí/ 'brother or sister'; and so on. This is also a metonymic use, where parents use their own children to metonymize themselves through blood bonds, and then address others as their own children. Through these metonymies, the speakers lower their own status and elevate the listener's status, which not only expresses respect for the listener but also plays a role in reducing the mental distance between each other.

Third, using Burmese kinship terms to address people other than relatives is essentially a metaphor. People establish a cross-space mapping based on the similarity between these non-relatives and their relatives in age, gender, and other characteristics, so as to construct metaphors to achieve social addressing. This reflects Burmese people's metaphorical cognitive orientation of turning strangeness into familiarity.

Fourth, metaphorical thinking in Burmese kinship terms is also reflected in the use of orientational metaphors. In the Burmese kinship term system, the Burmese people use internal and external orientational metaphors to refer to consanguinity and affinity. For a family, consanguinities often occupy the majority, while affinities are relatively fewer than

consanguinities. According to the figure and ground theory, when people recognize things, the first thing they pay attention to is the focused part, which is reflected by giving special speech marks in language expression. kʰé ò/ and /θameʔ/, which are used to indicate affinity relationships in Burmese kinship terms, refer to "males from other families" and "females from other families" respectively. In the cognition of Burmese people, people who join a certain family through a marital relationship are considered foreign and exist in opposition to the inner group of the consanguinity in the family.

Suggestion

The researcher suggests that the language should be studied on the basis of Ethnomimetic because, as far as the researcher has shown, there is a very little work in this field compared to the work of the study of terms of kinship that they should be studied, learned and supported for further studies as follows:

1. The study of Burmese kinship terms in other places, such as the central region, the north, etc., or kinship terms in other countries of the world.

2. The Study brings the kinship terms in Burmese to be used between relatives and non-relatives as well as the use of relatives in other circles and other Burmese languages in different fields.

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