

A Sound System of Yaw Dialect Spoken In North-West Myanmar, Magway Division

Sajjana¹,

Sakchai Posai² and Narogchai Pintrymool³

Mahachulanongkornrajavidyalaya University^{1,2,3}

Corresponding Author, Email: ashinsajjana.yaw@gmail.com

Abstract

This thesis entitled “A sound system of Yaw dialect spoken in north-west Myanmar, Magway Division”. The Objectives of this research are: 1) to study phonological system of Yaw dialect spoken in north-west Myanmar, Magway Division 2) to compare and contrast the phonological system of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language spoken in Magway Division of north-west Myanmar. The research involved a target population of 196 people in Nwe Pyin village, Gangaw district area in north-west Myanmar, all of them whom participated in the study. The study followed both quantitative and qualitative research methodology employing the questionnaire, in-depth interview, and testing. It was analyzed in descriptive results.

The result of research found as follows:

The researcher found that the linguistic of sound system same and differences modifications in the expression of vowels, consonants and words list of categories sound with a focus on understanding how specific sound on phonological changes within the cultural and linguistic context of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese sounds as stated that the investigation included 196 respondents were male about 93 (47.44%) and 103 (52.55%)

* Received: 14 February 2024; Revised: 18 December 2024; Accepted: 25 December 2024

of respondents were female. The age of respondents was divided into four categories, the respondents were 20 to over 40 years respondents. In the quantitative analysis, it was observed that the majority of people used Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language. For address of respondents, stated that all live in NwePyin village, Gangaw district of Magway Division, North-west Myanmar.

The researcher found that Tone of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese given in 10 symbol tones in order to make a pair of words and sentences, the phonation of the initial consonant can trigger a tone split which explains how to making in Yaw dialect of responded. The striking features was the lack in any real consensus on major issues such as the pitch characteristics of the low and high tones. Both segmental and suprasegmental, including the features of pitch level, pitch contour, phonation type, vowel quality and duration.

Lastly, the researcher found that vocabulary sounds, apart from the abovementioned vowels and consonants, the sounds pronunciation of category of words in Fruits, there was three sounds at the same pronunciation and others seven consonants' sounds are difference. Additional finding in Fresh herbs, there were the four sounds are the same and others six vocabularies' sounds are difference. This research focused on understanding the role and significance of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese. The study was explored how these terms function in shaping interpersonal relationships, societal structures, and cultural norms within these specific communities. More addition, it was uncover local perspectives and practices associated with Yaw dialect sound Modern Burmese terminology, providing insights into the cultural intricacies that define familial bonds and social interactions in these villages.

Keywords: Burmese Language; Yaw Dialect; Sound System; Comparative Sounds; Same and Difference Sounds

Introduction

The people of Burmese who speak the Yaw dialect in the Magway division, Gangaw district, North-west in Myanmar, is a kind of Burmese people the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, golden-land, or the symbol of Pagoda, is a country in Southeast Asia. It is the largest country in Mainland and Southeast Asia, and according to the government of immigration statement in October “the current population of Myanmar is 55,231,413 as of Wednesday October 5, 2022, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data.” (Worldometers, 2002)

Myanmar appears with Bagan which is an ancient city the beginning of Myanmar by the king Anawrahtar Bagan dynasty. It is shaped like a kite with a long tail that runs south along the Malay Peninsula. The country is bordered by China to the north and northeast, Laos, to the east, Thailand to the Southeast, the Andaman Sea and Bay of the Bengal to the south and southwest, and India to the northwest. Its total length from north to south is about 1,275 miles (2,050 km), and its width at the widest part, across the center of the country at about the latitude of the city of Mandalay, is approximately 580 miles (930 km) from east to west.” (David I. Steinberg, Michael Arthur Aung-Thwin, Maung Htin Aung, et al, 2022)

The majority of Burmese speakers, who live throughout the Ayeyarwady River Valley, use a number of largely similar dialects, while a minority speaks non-standard dialects found in the peripheral areas of the country. These dialects include: Tanintharyi Region: Merguese (Myeik, Beik), Tavoyan (Dawei), and Palaw. Magway Region: Gangaw District, [gəũŋɡ kʰəjəiũ] is a district of the Magway Division in central Myanmar, Yaw, chin, and Taungthar (Pyu) dialect. Shan State: Inthar, Taungyo and Danu. Arakanese (Rakhine) in Rakhine State and Marama in Bangladesh are also sometimes considered dialects of Burmese and sometimes as separate languages. Despite substantial vocabulary and pronunciation differences, there is mutual intelligibility among most Burmese dialects. (University of Hawaii Press, 1989)

Statement of problem is the people who were born in later, new generations, they go around the country and oversea. This generations people, although they speak Burmese language, other modern Burmese people don't understand.

Another phenomenon within a language that works to define a generation gap occurs within families in which different generations speak different primary languages. The differences between each generation can cause misunderstandings because everyone faces different experiences. There are times however when the people can cover that gap and understand their generation and the generation before them, who spoken Yaw dialect, where live in Gangaw district in Magway division in north-west Myanmar, are also a kind of Burmese people. So, there are different between Yaw dialect and modern Burmese sound system in Myanmar. The Research will be focus on phonological study and compare both of Yaw dialect sound system and modern Burmese sound. The purpose of this study is to describe a phonological study of Yaw dialects to concerning with the Burmese sound system, Burmese language spoken in Gangaw district Magway division in north-west Myanmar. Especially, these regions have been famous by the original Burmese speakers.

The researcher tries to use both qualitative and quantitative method to study the topic with a clear expectation that the result of the study serves as a study for those who want to know Yaw dialect language and sound system of Gangaw district of Magway division in north-west Myanmar. Another expected benefit is that this study is useful for further linguistics studies in Burmese dialect.

Objectives of the Research

- 1) To study phonological system of Yaw dialect spoken in north-west Myanmar, Magway Division.
- 2) To compare and contrast the phonological system of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language spoken in Magway Division of north-west Myanmar.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present research employs a quantitative method in order to nature of focusing on a study of Yaw dialect spoken in the area of Nwe Pyin village, North-west Myanmar. The researcher started investigating population in total 400 villagers the

sample population was selected 196 persons. The researcher used the questionnaire and interview them for data collection. So, researcher started investigating published documents on the North-West Burmese language Yaw dialect to become acquainted with the language.

Firstly, the researcher started, a preliminary survey was made in March 2022. Researcher collected data in May 2022 and the data was then checked again in August 7, 2023. To elicit the data, researcher prepared a word list and asked key informant to pronounce particular word for several times.

To choose ten native speakers of Yaw dialect who were to be used as informants, the criterion for selection selection as follow, who were spoken in NwePyin village, North-West Myanmar, Magway Division.

They must be native speaker of Yaw dialect people whose parents of Myanmar.

The informants must use Yaw dialect in their daily lives.

The informant must have completed the curriculum so that they can pronounce the sounds clearly and correctly. The informants are alert, diplomatic, and helpful.

The informants are between 25 - 80 years old, so that their language would not be influenced much in Yaw dialect as same as modern Burmese language.

Populations and Sample

The researcher used the sample size estimation using Krejcie and Morgan determination for statistic use focusing of this research was to determine the efficacy of a new method of selecting sample sizes for multiple the population to study on total 400 persons of 196 persons in Nwe Pyin villagers. There are three factors that determine the size of the confidence interval for a given confidence level. The researcher interviewed the key informants face to face via social media the populations of 196 persons represented of selected 10 persons results and the key informants are 10 villagers from Gangaw district in North-West Myanmar. The informants' participants interview face to face to the zoom link to the people who were spoken Yaw dialect of Burmese language.

The researcher selected 10 persons villagers who speak Yaw dialect in their daily life, who can speak Burmese clearly with perfect articulators of phonology of Burmese consonants, vowels and tones, who can also speak and understanding the meaning of Burmese language.

In this part, ten people had been selected for the interview for investigation of the speaking Yaw dialect as follow:

The informant's age is between 25- 80 years old so that they could have much experience in language.

The informants must have been born in NwePyin village, Gangaw district, Magway division of North-West Myanmar and Yaw dialect speaking Burmese language as their first language. In this part, ten people were selected for the interview for investigation of speaking Yaw dialect as fellow;

Research Tools

This study was conducted through a detailed interview to get a general view of sounds, vocabulary, and pronunciations used in Yaw dialect.

It is about the general information of native speakers in NwePyin village, Gangaw district, Magway division of North-West Myanmar. All of the data in this study are elicited from 10 Yaw dialect spoken Burmese people informants. All of them are Yaw dialect spoken and lived in NwePyin village, Gangaw district, Magway division of North-West Myanmar.

It is qualitative research. So, this research tools of data collection are an In-depth interview with the scheduled questions of a phonology of Yaw dialect the sound system of consonants, vowels and tones of spoken by Nwe Pyin villagers, in Gangaw district Magway division of North-west Myanmar. The Questions are clearly written for a good and effective communication to get valid and reliable data.

Result of General Information of the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire described about information related to the participants' backgrounds and some personal information. This section presented general information about the respondents consisting of the gender of the respondents, age, status, native language, occupation and address of respondents. The researcher used statistical values of frequency and percentage in the following tables 1-5 to analyze data. The researcher conducted the data with an interview the respondents through conversational interview to make them comfortably and gave rich information. Finding

from the Testing Vowel sounds pronounced in the indicators of similarities and differences by the Respondent.

In this second part, the table demonstrated the respondents about Yaw dialect speaking used by the respondents in NwePyin village, Gangaw district. And comparison of ten vocabulary sounds were included as prepared questionnaires for the respondents. The finding results of the questions were as follows:

Table 1 Testing Vowel Sounds

Item No.	Vowel Sounds	Yaw Dialect	Modern Burmese	Indicators of the Similarities and Differences of Sounds pronounced	
				Same	Difference
1.	eʔ [crack]	æʔ	εʔ		✓
2.	u [property]	utssä	utssä	✓	
3.	ĩŋ [powerful]	aŋa:	ĩŋa:		✓
4.	aóũ [coconut]	aóũ	aóũ	✓	
5.	ĩŋ[unwillingly]	ĩŋĩŋĩŋ	ĩŋĩŋĩŋ		✓
6.	im [home]	im	im	✓	
7.	ãr [pond]	ãr	ãr	✓	
8.	ãrʔ [hot]	ãrʔ	ãrʔ	✓	
9.	aʊk [base]	aʊk	aʊk	✓	
10.	aʊŋ [win]	aʊŋ	aʊŋ	✓	

From the table: 4.2.1 above shows the sounds pronunciation of category of words in test of vowel sounds in Yaw dialect and modern Burmese given by the key informants who are native speaker Yaw dialect of North-west Myanmar Magway division produced respectively. The result shown that the sounds of pronunciation of vowel sound in Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese of speakers' difference at all people similar sounds from as given such as follow;

Table 2 Similar Sounds of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese

æʔ	ɛʔ
aŋa:	ɪŋa:
ɪŋtɪŋtɪŋ	ĩŋĩŋĩŋ

The shown numbers 1, 3, and 5 of these four vowels' sounds are difference and others six vowels' sounds are the same.

Because those who make the lower voice sound the same or speak with a lower voice are defined as "speaking with a lower voice". Here lower voice means Modern Burmese sound. "Khatt" means "make the same" or "follow them" according to the word of Shwe Pam Tin. Young people say that they make the sound of Modern Burmese speech sound the same. That is why some of vowel's sounds are difference just like æʔ, aŋ etc. It is called the velar finals <က> - k and <င> - ŋ can follow the vowels /a/. the spelling reflects the shifts of words.

And another reason is syllable rhymes i.e. vowels and any consonants that may follow them within the same syllable are indicated in Burmese by a combination of diacritic marks and consonant letters marked with the virama character (်) which suppresses the inherent vowel of the consonant letter. This mark is called asat in Burmese, [အသတ်; MLCTS: a.sat, [ʔ_aθ_aʔ], which means "nonexistence". That means the consonantal-letter is consonantal-akhara, whose inherent vowel has been killed by the Virama (viram) {a.pût}. Vowels are the sounds produced with a widely open articulatory tract.

Table 3 Testing Consonants Sounds

Item No.	Consonants Sounds Consonants	Yaw Dialect	Modern Burmese	Indicators of the Similarities and Differences of Sounds pronounced	
				Same	Difference
1.	k [hen]	kjeʔma	kjæʔma		✓
2.	kh [cook]	tʃʰeʔ	tʃʰeʔ		✓
3.	g [cotton]	gwɛN	wagùN		✓
4.	ŋa: [fish]	ŋá:	ŋá:	✓	
5.	sa: [eat]	sá:	sá:	✓	
6.	sʰ[elephant]	sʰaŋ	sʰɪŋ		✓
7.	z [spoon]	zwɛN	zùN		✓
8.	ɲ [night]	ɲa	ɲa	✓	
9.	dh[electriclight]	dhutmi:	dhaʔmi:		✓
10.	w [pig]	weʔ	ɛʔ		✓

From the table: 4.2.2 above shows the sounds pronunciation of category of words in Taste of consonants sounds in Yaw dialect and modern Burmese sounds given by the key informants who are native speaker Yaw dialect of North-west Myanmar Magway division produced respectively. The result shown that sounds of pronunciation test of consonants sound in Yaw dialect and modern Burmese of speakers' different level of ages at all people pronounced sounds at the similar sounds from the test given such as follow;

Table 4 Similar Sounds Yaw dialect and modern Burmese

ṇá:	ṇá:
sá:	sá:
ṇa	ṇa

The shown numbers 4, 5 and 8 of these three consonants' sounds are the same and others seven consonants' sounds are difference.

Consonant sounds are created by either partially or completely cutting off the airflow when the sound is produced, giving them a harsher sound. In this testing of consonants sound, in the process of articulation, an obstruction occurs in the vocal tract i.e. the tongue touches the palate, the mouth is closed, the produced sound is a consonant. The sounds 'in-between', articulated with a narrowed vocal tract are called approximants. for example, some consonants sound which are represented in orthography by the letters and, and in the phonetic alphabet of the International Phonetic Association by the same symbols /w/ and /j/, slash brackets mean broad transcription. In a sense, they are a bit like incomplete consonants.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate Sound System of Yaw dialect spoken in North-West Myanmar, Magway Division. The research had two main objectives: the first, to study phonological system of Yaw dialect spoken in north-west Myanmar, Magway Division. The second, to compare and contrast the phonological system of Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language spoken in Magway Division of north-west Myanmar.

The result was that shows the sounds pronunciation of category of words in test of vowel sounds in Yaw dialect and modern Burmese given by the key informants who are native speaker of Yaw dialect Modern Burmese in respectively. The sounds of pronunciation of vowel sound in Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese of speakers' difference at all people similar sounds from as given four vowels' sounds are difference and others six vowels' sounds are the same. And then another the result of finding shown

that sounds of pronunciation test of consonants sound in Yaw dialect and modern Burmese all people pronounced three consonants' sounds are the same and others seven consonants' sounds are difference sounds pronunciation of category of words.

The result of test of vocabulary sounds, apart from the abovementioned vowels and consonants, the sounds pronunciation of category of words in Taste of fruits, there was three sounds at the same pronunciation and others seven consonants' sounds are difference. Additional finding in Fresh herbs, there were the four sounds are the same and others six vocabularies' sounds are difference.

They responded to Yaw dialect speaking depends on the context and the specific question you have. Here are some possible knowing about it. I can acknowledge the richness and diversity that Yaw dialect adds to the linguistic landscape. I can express appreciation for the cultural heritage it represents and its importance to the Yaw community.

To sum up, the researcher showed many about the responded the testing of vowels sounds, Testing consonants sounds, testing of words lists of categories, Testing of Tone of words and Sentences. All of them answered Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language can speak well and frankly in the questions word of collect data for the study of Sound system of Yaw dialect and Phonological features of Burmese language spoken at Nwe Pyin village, Gangaw district, North-west Myanmar Magway division.

Discussion

This section is to discuss the research statement question and finding results. Actually, it is to discuss what the research the different Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese spoken in NwePyin village, Gangaw district of North-west Myanmar, and then whose research was relevant to the present research. So, the present study was designed to determine the effect sound system term. The comparative of phonological study of Burmese language in southern Myanmar, is the same grammatically the explanations, and extremely useful for the examples provided Soma, Ven; (2020), an amazing compendium of Burmese language, a truly useful, and even indispensable, tool for anyone learning the language.

The result of illustrate each grammatical structure with several example sentences. The examples alone would be worth the price of this volume, as it is difficult to come by a similar collection of illustrative examples elsewhere. The researcher Sandar Lin, Miss; (2018), expressed an excellent introduction to spoken Burmese. The experience of her work, her high-quality in teaching, and her ability in making the subject interesting and fascinating, make this compact monograph very helpful in learning the basics of the Burmese language, clear. The result of the study revealed that tones of the final syllables or particles create different intonation contours, if the pitch pattern of the final or particles is falling, the tone of the utterance is falling; if the pitch pattern is rising, then the tone of the utterance will be rising, which is predictable. There are four types of phonological words; monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic, and tetrasyllabic. Each word type carries predictably strong stress at the final syllable. There are three types of syllables; major, minor, and trisyllable.

Finally, the study of the phonemes of difference is contrast Mon dialect spoken in of Myanmar, Min Min Latt; (2021), to analyze consonant and vowel sounds as well as tonemes of Mon dialect spoken in Myanmar. According to the first objective, his thesis studies is the history and importance of the story of phonemes of Mon dialect spoken in Myanmar. According to the second objective, the study analyzes consonant and vowel sounds as well as tonemes of Mon dialect spoken in Myanmar.

Suggestion and Suggestion for further studies

This study collected the data in a short period of time from NwePyin village, Gangaw district, North-west Myanmar, Magway Division, Yaw dialect and Modern Burmese language same and difference sound in thus the study of Myanmar peoples used dialect spoken might not fully have been investigated. this section is divided into two subsections as the following:

Suggestion

In this section, the researcher seeks assistance for future studies with minimal reliance on the references from the current research. Subsequent investigations should

allocate additional time to gather data and expand the scope to encompass a broader array of locations and individuals - both within the same locale and across different places. This approach aims to yield more generalized results. The ensuing recommendations are categorized into subsections as follows:

- 1) A phonological study of North-west Myanmar Chin language.
- 2) The study of Burmese language and southern Yaw dialect of Myanmar.
- 3) To analysis the characteristics of Burmese language spoken and Yaw dialect of North-West Myanmar, Magway Division.
- 4) The analysis of Yaw dialect and Chin dialect in Gangaw district in Myanmar.
- 5) To study of comparison of Chin language and Burmese language in North-West Myanmar.

Suggestion for further Studies

Incorporating recommendations for additional research, such as identifying unresolved queries or emerging trends, would stimulate further exploration. Thus, future studies should be structured as follows:

1. From taken the result, the next study should be Morphological study of Yaw dialect and Chin dialect in Gangaw district in Myanmar.
2. Hopefully, for the future research should be comparison in Arakan dialect and Yaw dialect in North-West Myanmar, Magway Division.
3. For the future researchers who want to conduct research with the same and difference Dawai dialect and Yaw dialect in Myanmar.
4. For the next study should be investigated linguistic borrowing by a comparative study on Burmese and Taung Thar (Pyu dialect) dialect their translation strategies.
5. For the future study should be a study of Bagan age of Taung Thar (Pyu dialect) from the culture and cognitive perspectives.

These objectives can serve as a starting point for further research, and you can adjust them based on the specific focus and scope you want for your study.

References

- Ankura, Ven. (2020). A phonological study of the Burmese language spoken in Magway Division of Myanmar (Master's thesis).
- Chang, C. B. (2003). High-interest loans: The phonology of English loanword adaptation in Burmese (Bachelor's thesis, Harvard University). Retrieved in 2011.
- Roop, D. H. (1972). An introduction to the Burmese writing system. Yale University Press.
- Bradley, D. (1995). Reflexives in Burmese. In *Studies in Burmese languages* (A-83, No. 13, pp. 139–172). *Papers in Southeast Asian Linguistics*.
- Brentari, D., Fenlon, J., & Cormier, K. (2018). *Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Wheatley, J. K. (1989). Burmese. In B. Comrie (Ed.), *The world's major languages* (pp. 660–673). Routledge.
- Wheatley, J. K. (1986). Burmese. In B. Comrie (Ed.), *The world's major languages* (pp. 10). Routledge.
- Okell, J. (1989). The Yaw dialect of Burmese. In J. H. C. S. Davidson (Ed.), *South-East Asia linguistic studies presented to Jeremy H. C. S. Davidson* (pp. 132–160). University of London.
- Herbert, P., & Milner, A. C. (1989). *South-East Asia: Languages and literatures*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Jones, R. B., McCoy, J., & Light, T. (Eds.). (1986). *Contributions to Sino-Tibetan studies*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Soma, Ven. (2020). A phonological study of the Southern Burmese language spoken in Mon-State of Myanmar (Master's thesis).
- Stokoe, W. C. (1987). *Sign language structure: An outline of the visual communication systems of the American deaf* (2nd ed., Vol. 8). Silver Spring, MD: Linstok Press. (Original work published 1960).
- Tweedie, G., & Johnson, R. (2018). Listening instruction and patient safety. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 2(1).