

## A Comparative Study of Sentence Construction in Myanmar and German Languages

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### Abstract

This paper presents the sentence structure of Myanmar and German languages categorizing the simple sentence construction and complex sentence construction. In this paper, word orders in the sentence and effected meanings are discussed comparatively with examples about thoseby categorizing in different sectors based on the similarities and the differences of the two languages. Not only the language we are learning, knowing the nature of the construction of the sentence structure of our native languagemakes more effective in studying another language. The aim of this paper is to highlight this fact. As a result of this comparative study, the order of the elements is different in the two languages, especially the position of verb. In Myanmar language, the verb is always the final element of the clause, while in German it always fills the second position. Both languages use modifiers and different types of clauses to construct simple and complex sentences. This paper is to contribute learning and studying in a supporting way.

**Key Words:** Sentence Construction, Simple Sentence Structure, Complex Sentence Structure

### Introduction

Today there are about 7000 languages which people are now using for communication all around the world. Those various languages have more or less similarities and the differences with one another. But if we combine all the languages and study them scientifically, it can be sensed that one language of a race is basically same with another. All the languages around the world havesound system and grammar. In the sound system, it contains the structure of vowels and consonants of a language while in grammar stage; it contains word formation and sentence structure.

In studying a language, there are many sectors to study like how voices are formed, steps by steps formation of changing from words to sentences, meaning and vocabulary development, evolution of words in changing eras. In this paper, a comparative study about the sentence structure of Myanmar language which belongs to Tibeto-Burman languages and the structure of German language which comes from Indo-European languages will be discussed.

### Literature Review

In this paper, based on the studied data and prescribed textbook data, the sentence construction of Myanmar and German languages are described. As it was based on the sentence, it is also discussed what the meaning of the sentence is. The word "sentence " was defined by German scholar Walter Jung as "it refers to a phrase that describe people's emotional feelings and any actions" (ဦးလှကြိုင်၊ ၂၀၀၅). In the book မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါ အတွဲ(၃), it is written as "a sentence which is a systematic arrangement of speeches to describe the intended meaning"(မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့၊ ၂၀၀၅) In brief, a sentence can be defined as "a phrase formed by the connection of required speeches in the grammatical regulation to be

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able to understand a news or an event concerning with the people's actions and emotions”.

There are a lot of books on sentence construction written by Myanmar and German authors. U HlaKyaing, the retired professor of German Department of Yangon University of Foreign Languages discussed only about the complex sentence structure in the book “*German Grammar and Composition of Words*”(2005). In the paper “မြန်မာဝါကျဖွဲ့ထုံးကျမ်း” written by ဦးဖေမောင်တင်, parts of speech in Myanmar language can be studied. In the book, “မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါအတွဲ ၃” (မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့၊ ၂၀၀၅), Myanmar language grammar is described.

Most of the examples in the paper are referenced from the textbooks prescribed for the first year and second year undergraduate of Bachelor of Arts "DetuscheSprachlehrefürAusländerTeil I and DetuscheSprachlehrefürAusländerTeil II ". Also, in the Myanmar grammar book 3, grammatical data and grammar terms can be learnt.

### **Aims**

It is said that if we have good understanding of mother language, it is much helpful in learning another language. The present research, therefore, aims to know the sentence construction of the language we are learning after studying the simple and complex sentence structures of the mother language, Myanmar. It also aims to master and use it skillfully and again to know the similarity and the difference of sentence construction in both languages.

### **Materials and Methods**

The data required for this paper were collected from many books and research paper on Grammar and sentence structure by Myanmar and German authors and researcher. Besides, reliable online references are downloaded from the internet websites. The data were analyzed by using comparative method.

### **Research Questions**

This paper's research questions are as follows.

1. In Myanmar and German languages, what kind of simple sentences can be made using modifying words?
2. In Myanmar and German languages, what kind of complex sentences can be written using dependent clauses?
3. What are the similarities and the differences in sentence construction of Myanmar and German languages?

### **Findings and Discussion**

In studying the structure of the sentence, the sentence can be divided into categories according to the number of the predicate contained in the sentence. The sentence generally consists of subject and verb. The verb is more important than the subject in making a sentence. Therefore, the verb is the most important part of the sentence.

In this paper, Myanmar and German sentences will be analyzed and discussed as follows:

1. the comparative study of the simple sentence

2. the comparative study of the complex sentence

**1. The comparative study of the simple sentence**

**1.1. The intransitive verbs**

The simple sentence is the foundation of all the sentences. Simple sentence in Myanmar language consists of a subject (S) and a verb(V). Such a sentence only describes being something or somebody, or any actions. Based on the sentence with a verb and a subject, many sentence structures can be written using the subject complement (C), the object (O) and one or more than one modifierslike adverbs of time (T), reason (R), comitative case of modifier(CM), instrumental case of modifier (IM), locative case of modifier (LM), allative case of modifier (AIM), ablative case of modifier (AbM), possessive case of modifier (PM) and modifier of purpose (P) with respect to the meaning one wants to describe. Also in German language, a subject and a verb are mainly consisted in forming a simple sentence and it can be seen that simple sentences are formed when other modifying words are combined with those basic things.

Example (1) နေသာသည်။  
                   S                  V

Die Sonne scheint.  
                   S                  V

Example (2) ပီတာသည် ကျောင်းသား ဖြစ်သည်။  
                   S                  CV

Peter ist Student.  
                   S          V                  C

Example (3) ရစ်ချတ်သည် ကျောင်းမှ ပြန်လာသည်။  
                   S                  AbM                  V

Richard kommt von der Schule.  
                   S                  V                  AbM

Example (4) ဆရာသည် အတန်းထဲသို့ ဝင်လာသည်။  
                   S                  AIM                  V

Der Lehrer kommt in die Klasse.  
                   S                  V                  AIM

Example (5) လေယာဉ်သည် ရန်ကုန်မြို့သို့ ဆိုက်ရောက်သည်။  
                   S                  AIM                  V

Das Flugzeug landet in Yangon.  
                   S                  V                  AIM

Example (6) ကလေးသည်လမ်းမပေါ်တွင်ကစားနေသည်။  
                   S                  LM                  V

Das Kindspieltauf der Straße.  
                   S                  VLM

Example (7) သစ်ရွက်တို့သည် နွေရာသီ၌ ကြွေသည်။  
                   S                  T                  V

Die Blätter fallen im Sommer.  
                   S                  V                  T

Example (8) ပီတာသည် ဘတ်စ်ကားဖြင့် သွားသည်။  
                   S                  IM                  V

Peter fährtmit dem Bus.  
                   S                  V                  IM

Example (9) ပီတာသည် ကျောင်းမှ အိမ်သို့ ပြန်လာသည်။

- Example (10)  $\begin{matrix} S & AbM & AIM & V \\ \text{Peter} & \text{kommt} & \text{von der Schule} & \text{nach Hause.} \\ S & V & AbM & AIM \\ \text{ရစ်ချတ်သည်} & \text{ဦးမြူလာ၏} & \text{သား} & \text{ဖြစ်သည်။} \\ S & PM & C & V \\ \text{Richard} & \text{ist} & \text{der Sohn} & \text{von Herrn Müller.} \\ S & V & C & PM \\ \text{ပီတာသည်} & \text{ဖျားနာမှုကြောင့်} & \text{ကျောင်းသို့} & \text{မသွားပါ။} \\ S & R & AIM & V \\ \text{Peter} & \text{geht} & \text{wegen der Krankheit} & \text{nicht in die Schule.} \\ S & V & R & AIM \\ \text{ရစ်ချတ်သည်} & \text{ဖခင်နှင့်အတူ} & \text{လာသည်။} \\ S & CM & V \\ \text{Richard} & \text{kommt mit} & \text{dem Vater.} \\ S & V & CM \\ \text{ရစ်ချတ်သည်} & \text{မနက်မှညနေအထိ} & \text{အလုပ်လုပ်သည်။} \\ S & T & V \\ \text{Richard} & \text{arbeitet} & \text{von morgen bis} & \text{abend.} \\ S & V & T \end{matrix}$

Seeing the example above, example (1) is showing that the verb follows the subject in Myanmar language like German. However, the difference starts when extending the sentences. Unlike German sentence structure, subject can be found at the beginning of the sentence. A sentence is usually constructed and used when the verb is put as the second place of the sentence and just after that modifier as required. In Myanmar sentences, however, subject is at the beginning of a sentence and the verb is placed at the end of the sentence. Between these, some modifiers are filled out to form a sentence. So it can be realized this makes different with German sentence structure.

**1.2. The transitive verbs**

A significant difference between the sentence construction of Myanmar and German languages is easily to be seen in the sentence construction with the transitive verb. German sentence construction is based on the verb. Upon the different ability of the verb, it can be constructed like direct object (Oa), indirect object (Od) or prepositional object (Op) at the request of the verb while Myanmar language does not have various types of objects(O). It is noted that when there are two objects, inanimate objects are written as direct objects and living things or human(animate) objects are regarded as indirect objects (Recipient). For the word order in the sentence, the latter one comes before the former one. In German language, inanimate words are direct objects and as the indirect objects, living things words are first written just before the inanimate words.

- Example (1)  $\begin{matrix} \text{ပီတာသည်} & \text{ဆရာကို} & \text{မေးသည်။} \\ S & O & V \\ \text{Peter} & \text{fragt} & \text{den Lehrer.} \\ S & V & Oa \\ \text{ပီတာသည်} & \text{မိဘကို} & \text{ကူညီသည်။} \\ S & O & V \\ \text{Peter} & \text{hilft} & \text{den Eltern.} \\ S & V & Od \\ \text{ပီတာသည်} & \text{ဘတ်စ်ကားကို} & \text{စောင့်နေသည်။} \\ S & T & V \end{matrix}$

S O V  
Peter wartet auf den Bus.

Example (4) ရီတာသည် စာအုပ်ကို ဆရာအား ပေးသည်။  
 S V Op  
Rita gibt dem Lehrer das Buch.  
 S O Recipient V  
 S V Od Oa

In Myanmar language, placing verb in the end of the sentence, the sentence can be arranged as Subj + Obj+ V in simple sentence composition with object case. In German language, it can be arranged as Subj+ V +Obj. This fact can be obviously found in the following examples.

Example (1) ဖောက်ထွင်းသမားသည် တံခါးကို သော့တူဖြင့် ဖွင့်သည်။  
 S O IM V  
Der Einbrecher öffnet die Tür mit dem Dietrich.  
 S V Oa IM

Example (2) ရစ်ချတ်သည် ပီတာကို ဘူတာရုံမှ ကြိုလာသည်။  
 S O AbM V  
Richard holt Peter vom Bahnhof ab.  
 S V Oa AbM

Example (3) ရစ်ချတ်သည် ပီတာကို အိမ်သို့ လိုက်ပို့သည်။  
 S O AIM V  
Richard begleitet Peter nach Hause.  
 S V Oa AIM

Example (4) ကလေးသည် စာအုပ်ကို လက်ထဲတွင် ကိုင်ထားသည်။  
 S O LM V  
Das Kind hält das Buch in der Hand.  
 S V Oa LM

Example (5) ရစ်ချတ်သည် ကားကို လွန်ခဲ့သောတနင်္လာနေ့က ရောင်းခဲ့သည်။  
 S O T V  
Richard verkaufte am letzten Montag den Wagen.  
 S V T Oa

Example (6) ရီတာသည် ပီတာကို ရုပ်ရှင်ရုံမှာ မနေ့ကတွေ့ခဲ့သည်။  
 S O LM T V  
Rita traf Peter gestern im Kino.  
 S V Oa T LM

Example (7) တပ်မတော်သားတို့သည် နိုင်ငံအတွက် အသက်ကို ပေးလှူကြသည်။  
 S P O V  
Die Soldaten opfern ihr Leben für das Land.  
 S V Oa P

Example (8) အဖွဲ့ဝင်များက ဦးမြူလာကို ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ တင်မြှောက်ကြသည်။  
 S O C V  
Die Mitglieder wählen Herrn Müller zum Vorsitzenden.  
 S V Oa C

If the compositions of simple sentence are juxtaposed between Myanmar language and German language, the similarities will be found. They are that sentence can be written putting a case which speaker or writer wants to emphasize according to his or her own wish in the beginning of the sentence. In such writing, however, the subject must be nearly placed with verb in Myanmar syntax. Whilst German syntaxes are constructed, the rest of the parts should be

constructed after the word that you want to give priority to describe has been written and so do subject and verb. It can be seen in the following examples.

Example :

|               |              |              |              |          |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| မောင်မောင်သည် | ရန်ကုန်သို့  | မီးရထားဖြင့် | မနက်ဖြန်တွင် | သွားမည်။ |
| S             | AIM          | IM           | T            | V        |
| ရန်ကုန်သို့   | မီးရထားဖြင့် | မနက်ဖြန်တွင် | မောင်မောင်   | သွားမည်။ |
| AIM           | IM           | T            | S            | V        |
| မီးရထားဖြင့်  | ရန်ကုန်သို့  | မနက်ဖြန်တွင် | မောင်မောင်   | သွားမည်။ |
| IM            | AIM          | T            | S            | V        |
| မနက်ဖြန်တွင်  | ရန်ကုန်သို့  | မီးရထားဖြင့် | မောင်မောင်   | သွားမည်။ |
| T             | AIM          | IM           | S            | V        |

|             |        |             |             |              |
|-------------|--------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Mg Mg fährt | morgen | mit dem Zug | nach        | Yangon.      |
| S           | V      | T           | IM          | AIM          |
| Nach Yangon | fährt  | Mg Mg       | morgen      | mit dem Zug. |
| AIM         | V      | S           | T           | IM           |
| Mit dem Zug | fährt  | Mg Mg       | morgen      | nach Yangon. |
| IM          | V      | S           | T           | AIM          |
| Morgen      | fährt  | Mg Mg       | mit dem Zug | nach Yangon. |
| T           | V      | S           | IM          | AIM          |

## 2. The comparative study of the complex sentence

Complex sentence can be defined as the combination of one or two and above two simple sentences which are joined by a subordinate conjunction to each other to be a single sentence or a combined sentence. A complex sentence includes two main parts that are not only a main sentence which has complete meaning, and have subject and verb, besides it can stand independently itself but also clauses that are incomplete in meaning although there are subject and verb as well as it cannot stand itself. Clauses depend on nouns, adjectives and adverbs which are in main sentence. It can be classified by the functions of clauses. They are noun clause, adjective clause and adverb clause.

### 2.1. Noun clauses

There are subject and verb and they serve the function of subject and object from the main sentence. Although the clause is written before the main sentence in Myanmar language, it is not so in German language. Clauses are used to be written after the main sentence.

Example (1) ဝိတာ မနက်ဖြန်လာမှာ သေချာပါတယ်။  
*noun clause as subject*      independent clause  
Es ist sicher, dass Peter morgen kommt.  
 independent clause      *noun clause as subject*

Example (2) ဝိတာ စာမေးပွဲအောင်မယ်လို့ ကျွန်တော်ယုံကြည်တယ်။  
*noun clause as object*      independent clause  
Ich glaube, dass Peter die Prüfung besteht.  
 independent clause      *noun clause as subject*

### 2.2. Adjective clauses

There are subject and verb and it plays in adjective role. These clauses modify to the relevant noun and pronoun of main sentence. Adjective clauses are used to place before nouns they modified in Myanmar language. In German language, they should have to follow on after.

Example (1) ပီတာသည် ဆရာကြီးမေးသော မေးခွန်းကိုဖြေဆိုသည်။  
*adjective clause independent clause*

Peter beantwortet die Frage, die ihm der Lehrer stellt.  
*independent clause adjective clause*

2.3. Adverb clauses

Adverb clauses modify the relevant verbs and serve as the adverb. They are distinguished in construction of adverb clause by considering a variety of facts like giving a reason of the content in the main sentence and showing apparently the main concepts by supporting the verb. Though adverb clauses are distinguished into 9 different types in Myanmar language, they generally are merely 8 types in German language. Among them, the similarities of adverb clause between Myanmar language and German language are going to describe firstly.

2.3.1. Adverb clause of concession

Example: အခုလေးတင် နေ့လည်စာစားလာခဲ့သော်လည်း သူ့ဗိုက်ဆာနေပြီ။  
*adverb clause of concession independent clause*

Er hat noch Hunger, obwohl er gerade zu Mittag gegessen hat.  
*independent clause adverb clause of concession*

2.3.2. Adverb clause of time

Example: ဆရာ အတန်းထဲသို့ဝင်လာသောအခါ ကျောင်းသားများ မတ်တပ်ရပ်ကြသည်။

*adverb clause of time independent clause*  
Die Studenten stehen, wenn der Lehrer in die Klasse kommt.  
*independent clause adverb clause of time*

2.3.3. Adverb clause of purpose

Example: ပညာများသင်ယူလေ့လာစေရန် မိဘများသည် သားသမီးများကို ကျောင်းထားကြသည်။

*adverb clause of purpose independent clause*  
Die Eltern schicken ihre Kinder in die Schule, damit sie etwas lernen.  
*independent clause adverb clause of purpose*

2.3.4. Adverb clause of reason

Example: စာကြိုးစားသောကြောင့် မောင်မောင် စာမေးပွဲအောင်သည်။

*adverb clause of reason independent clause*  
Mg Mg besteht die Prüfung, weil er fleißig lernt.  
*Independent clause adverb clause of reason*

2.3.5. Adverb clause of condition

Example: မိုးရွာလျှင် ကျွန်တော် မလာပါ။

*adverb clause of condition independent clause*  
Ich komme nicht, wenn es regnet.  
*independent clause adverb clause of condition*

2.3.6. Adverb clause of manner

Example: မောင်မောင်သည် ထိုင်ခုံများကို တစ်ခုံပေါ်တစ်ခုံဆင့်လျက် ထောင့်တွင် ထားသည်။

Mg Mg stellt alle Stühle in die Ecke, *indem er sie aufeinanderstapelt.*  
independent clause    adverb clause of manner

In the example mentioned above, the conjunction of main sentence situates at the end of sentence and then verb is before that conjunction. To be exactly, the conjunction is at the beginning of the clause while the verb is placed at the end of the relevant sentence. Although other adverb clauses can be found in German language, these kinds of adverb clauses come under the adverb clause of manner.

Example(1) ဇန်နဝါရီလအေးသကဲ့သို့၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလတွင်လည်း အေးသည်။

Februar war es so kalt, wie es im Januar war.

Example(2) အလုပ်သည်ခက်ခဲသည်ဖြစ်စေ၊ မခက်ခဲသည်ဖြစ်စေပြီးစီးအောင်ဆောင်ရွက်ရမည်။

Sei die Arbeit auch schwer, sie muß geschafft wird.

Example(3) ရာသီဥတုသာယာကောင်းမွန်သလောက် ကျွန်တော်တို့ပြင်ဦးလွင်မှာနေမယ်။

Wir bleiben so lange in PyinOoLwin, wie das Wetter schön ist.

If the compositions of clauses and main sentence of the complex sentence are studied comparatively in both languages, most of the clauses in German language used to start with the conjunctions and verbs are at the ends of the relevant sentences. Besides we can find that clauses can be placed at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the main sentence.

Example: Obwohl er gerade zu Mittag gessen hat, hat er immer noch Hunger.  
Er hat, obwohl er gerade zu Mittag gegessen hat, noch Hunger.  
Er hat immer noch Hunger, obwohl er gerade zu Mittag gegessen hat.

Clauses in Myanmar language can be found before the main sentences as well as in the place where is between subject and verb of the main sentences.

Example: သူသည် အခုလေးတင် နေသည်စာစားလာခဲ့သော်လည်း မိုက်ဆာနေပြီ။  
အခုလေးတင် နေသည်စာစားလာခဲ့သော်လည်း သူမိုက်ဆာနေပြီ။

Clauses can be put in complex sentence once and above. So there is a collection of clauses which are combined with all of them over and over again, but the main sentence may be an only sentence. We can find that many clauses that the main sentence is referred progressively can be constructed. German grammarian classified such clauses that first-class clause (that the main sentence is directly referred) and second-class clause (that referred the causes of clause which directly related with the main sentence without relating clauses).

Example(1) မြူးနစ်မြို့တွင်နေထိုင်သောဦးမြူလာဆီသို့သွားရောက်လည်ပတ်ချင်သည်ဟု

second-class clause    first-class clause  
ကျွန်တော့်အား ပီတာကပြောပြသည်။  
Peter erzählt mir, dass er Herrn Müller besuchen will, der in Münchenwohnt.  
first-class clause    second-class clause

Example(2) ပျော်ရွှင်စွာလှည့်ပတ်ကြည့်ရှုချင်စရာကောင်းပြီး လှပသန့်ရှင်းသောဥယျာဉ်ပမာ



second-class clause

ပါးစောင်များ၊ ဆေးရောင်စုံဖြင့်လှပစွာစီခြယ်ထားသောငါးမန်းတို့၏ သွားများကို

first-class clause

ရေးဆွဲထားသော ရုပ်ပုံတွေလည်း ရှိသည်။

Es gäbe schöne Bilder, auf denen die Zähne der Haifische in prächtigen

first-class clause

Farben, ihre Rachen als reine Lustgärten, in denen es sich prächtig

second-class clause

tummeln läßt, dargestellt wären.

In this paper, sentence constructions in Myanmar language and German language were described by analyzing simple sentences and complex sentences. In Myanmar language, the verb can be placed at the end of a sentence constructing as Subj + Obj + V while simple sentences are composed. Without formulating word arrangements in the sentence, it is constructed not to ruin the theme of sentence that the writer wants to define. The word that the writer likes to emphasize among the words in sentence can be placed at the beginning. In German language, verbs will be found at the second place as usual in the simple sentence constructions. Although the words order is Subj + V + Obj + Modifier of time, reason, manner and place, the words that the writer wants to emphasize can be placed at the beginning of sentence like in Myanmar language.

Prepositions, particles, conjunction are used as joining words between the sentences in complex sentences composition in Myanmar language. Conjunctions are placed at the end of clauses and verbs are placed before it. Commonly, the clauses are placed at frontal part of sentence and the main sentences are after it. In German language, only conjunction is commonly used as the joining words in complex sentence composition which includes clauses and main sentence. Joining word is at the beginning of clause and verb is at the end of the relevant sentence. We learn that the main sentence is placed very often at first.

### Conclusion

There are many aspects to present when the sentence compositions in Myanmar language and German language are studied. The sentence composition of German language is compared with the writing system of Myanmar language basing on Myanmar Grammar in this paper. Nowadays the rate of foreign languages learners is growing fast. In this paper, the learners who are studying foreign language as a foreign language will find the similarities and differences of sentence composition between Myanmar language that we always use as mother tongue and German language. Author's presentation is merely like as much as a drop of water from the ocean. The more the learners try to know and study hard, the more he sees how broad the concepts of these two languages actually are. Studying the developments of mother language continuously, it shows a way to love the literature values of human history by attempting the respective languages of others to understand as much as we can.

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