

A Study on the Grammatical Use of Suffixed Particles in Myanmar Spoken Language

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Abstract

This paper studies the use of suffixed particles in spoken Myanmar language. The aim of this paper is to explore the importance of suffixes in grammatical structure and emphasizing the intended meaning of them used in spoken Myanmar Language. The suffixes under study in this paper are extracted from Myanmar Dictionary and Myanmar-English Dictionary published by Department of the Myanmar Language Commission. Definitions of these grammatical particles given in these dictionaries are studied and analysed. Analytical and Descriptive methods are used to carry out these research procedures. Findings of this study show that of all the suffixed particles found in Spoken Myanmar Language, the suffixes “*တောင့်၊ ဝါ၊ ခို၊ နှို၊ နှိုခို၊ ဝဲ၊ ဝဲ*” can be used for emphasis, can change the word class and can be used to express as a reported speech. These findings may be a great help for foreign students who are studying Myanmar Language to be able to use it grammatically.

Keywords: Spoken Language, Grammatical Uses, Particles, Suffixes.

Introduction

Almost every language has its written form and spoken form and spoken form is the primary mode of communication whereas written form is secondary. In other words, written form of language is invented in order to make the spoken language which is only audible to be visible. Most of the languages have both spoken and written forms, however, there are still some languages which have only spoken forms.

Myanmar language has both written and spoken forms. Languages are the representations of meanings and they have grammatical rules to follow to form meaningful and grammatical structures of a language. In Myanmar language, written form was developed from spoken form. There are many books and researches on Myanmar grammar but there are only a few researches done on the structure of spoken Myanmar language. There are similarities and differences between grammar rules of written language and spoken language.

In Myanmar Grammar, there are eight parts of speech: Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction and Particle. Among them, particle is a part of speech that supports the meaning of the other parts of speech: Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb and Preposition. If a particle is added to the beginning of a word, it is called prefix and if it is added to the end of a word, it is called suffix. This paper presents the suffixed particles added to nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives which can only be found in Spoken Myanmar language.

This paper will be a great help for the foreign students who are learning Myanmar spoken language and Myanmar grammar. Furthermore, they will be able to use correct and grammatical language by having the knowledge of grammatical structure of a particular word especially the use of particle which is used for emphasis.

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Research Questions

1. What suffixed particles are used in Myanmar spoken language and how are they used? What is the effect of using these particles?
2. What are the different use of particles in Spoken and written languages?
3. Are there grammar rules to follow in Myanmar spoken language like written language?

Literature Review

In မြန်မာဝါကျဖွဲ့ထုံးကျမ်း (Myanmar Syntax) written by U Pe Maung Tin (1961), different parts of a sentence and different structures of a sentence are described.

In မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါ (Myanmar Grammar) (3rd Ed) published by Myanmar language Commission (2016), which is intended for the students of Myanmar, important features of Myanmar language, such as, speech sounds, word, phrase, sentence, parts of speech and punctuation marks are presented.

Dr Maung Maung Lay (Myanmarsar), in his book of စကားထဲကသဒ္ဒါ (Grammar of Spoken Myanmar Language) (2017) described daily expressions and grammatical functions of Myanmar language. It is written in the form of a discussion on Grammar rules of Myanmar language.

Maung Khin Min (Danuphyu) wrote the book မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါသင်ကြားရေး (Teaching Myanmar Grammar) which was published for the first time in 2018 by the Department of the Languages of Myanmar Ethnic groups. In his book, the writer discussed the present situation of grammar teaching in Myanmar. The purpose of this book is to solve the problems that teachers and students face in teaching grammar in the classroom. It is a collection of the articles appeared weekly in “Myanmar Ah Lin” newspaper.

In this research paper, the suffixed particles in spoken Myanmar language, which are not described in the above mentioned books are presented. The grammatical usage which are only used in daily expressions from Myanmar dictionary are thoroughly studied and analysed in order to discover their grammatical system.

Finding and Discussion

The aim of this research is to explore the importance of suffixes in grammatical structure and emphasizing the intended manias of them used in spoken Myanmar Language. The following is the analysis of these particles in order to find out these. Discussion is made based on the finding.

Word class+ Suffix= Change the meaning and the word class

1. Verb/ Adjective + တာ = For emphasis
2. Verb/ Noun + တောင့် = For emphasis
3. Verb+ ဝါ = To emphasize the meaning of a verb
4. Verb + လို့ = To emphasize the meaning of a verb
5. Noun / Pronoun + မို့။ မို့မို့ = To emphasize a noun
6. Noun + ဝဲ = 1. to emphasize a noun
- Verb + ဝဲ = 2. to restrict the meaning of a verb

7. phrase / sentence + တဲ့ = to denote the meaning as reported speech

Finding and Discussion

I. Verb / Adjective + particle (တာ) = 1. Change word class

2. Emphasize meaning

3. Modify word

In spoken Myanmar language, ‘တာ’is used as a suffixed particle. In Myanmar dictionary, ‘ တာ ’ is defined as the following. ‘ တာ၊ part[colloq] ’ particle that can change a verb or an adjective to a noun. If the particle ‘တာ’ is added to the end of a verb or an adjective, it is changed to a noun.

Verb + တာ particle

ပြော + တာ = ပြောတာ

ဆို + တာ = ဆိုတာ

Example: ကိုကျော်စွာက ပြောတာဆိုတာ လိမ္မာပါးနပ်တယ်။

Ko Kyaw Swa is very tactful in speaking.

In the above example, the verbs, ‘ ပြော ’ and ‘ ဆို ’ are attached by the suffixed particle ‘ တာ ’ and become ‘ ပြောတာ ’, ‘ ဆိုတာ ’ which function as a noun in sentence meaning ‘ ပြောဆိုခြင်း ’.

Adjective + ‘တာ’ Suffixed particle

ကျန်းမာ + တာ

လိမ္မာ + တာ

Example: ဒီအိမ်မှာကျန်းမာတာ ဖေဖေပါ။

It is father who is healthy in this house.

စာသင်ခန်းမှာ လိမ္မာတာ ကျော်ကျော်ပါ။

It is Kyaw Kyaw who is clever in the classroom.

In the above examples, when adjectives ‘ကျန်းမာ’ and ‘လိမ္မာ’ are attached by ‘ တာ ’ suffixed particle, they function as Nouns in a sentence. They mean ‘ ကျန်းမာခြင်း ’ (health) and ‘ လိမ္မာခြင်း ’ (cleverness) which give the meanings of nouns.

II. Verb + Noun + ‘တောင်’ Suffixed particle = For emphasis

The particle ‘တောင်’ used in Myanmar Spoken language is defined as a word used for emphasis. It is equivalent to the meaning of particle ‘ ပင်လျှင် ’.

Verb + တောင် suffixed particle

တောင်းပန်တာ + တောင်

လာ + တောင်

Example: ဦးလေး တောင်းပန်တာတောင် မရဘူး။

Uncle didn't accept my apology.

ဒေါ်ဒေါ် အိမ်ကို လာတောင် မလာဘူး။

Aunty didn't come to my house.

In addition, as a particle suffixed to a noun as

Noun + တောင် suffixed particle

အိမ် + တောင်

ငါ + တောင်

Example: ဒီနွေရာသီမှာ အိမ်တောင် မပြန်ဘူး။

I didn't even return to my house this summer.

ငါတောင် စိတ်ပျက်ပြီ။

I feel disappointed.

In these utterances, the nouns 'အိမ်', 'ငါ' are attached by suffixed particle 'တောင်' and used as 'အိမ်တောင်', 'ငါတောင်' for emphasis.

III. Verb + 'ပဲ' suffixed particle = to emphasize a verb

In Myanmar spoken language, suffixed particle 'ပဲ' is usually added to a verb. In Myanmar dictionary, 'ပဲ' part[colloq] is defined as a particle suffixed to a verb for emphasis. For example, 'စားပဲ။ သွားပဲ။ ပြောပဲ။ ဟုတ်ပဲ။'. It is similar to 'ပါ၏' which is used to end a sentence in written language and also 'ပေါ့' which is used to end an utterance in spoken language .

Example: စားပဲ။

သွားပဲ။

ပြောပဲ။

ဟုတ်ပဲ။

In the above examples, the suffixed particle 'ပဲ' which is attached to the verbs 'စား။ သွား။ ပြော။ ဟုတ်။' support the verbs with emphasis.

IV. Verb + 'လို့' suffixed particle = to emphasize a verb

In Myanmar utterances, the suffixed particle 'လို့' is usually used. According to Myanmar dictionary, 'လို့' part[colloq] is defined as a particle used for emphasis. The meaning of a verb becomes prominent because of the particle 'လို့' added to the end of a verb.

Example: မုန့်ဟင်းခါး စားလို့ကောင်းတယ်။

In the above example, the particle ‘ လို့ ’ is added to the end of the verb ‘စား’ and used as ‘ စားလို့ ’ and it makes the meaning of the verb ‘စားသည်’ become prominent. Compared with ‘ မုန့်ဟင်းခါး ကောင်းတယ် ’, in the sentence ‘ မုန့်ဟင်းခါး စားလို့ကောင်းတယ် ’, the particle ‘ လို့ ’ can be said as a particle which emphasize the verb ‘ စား ’ in the sentence.

In Myanmar utterances, as suffixed particles such as ‘ တာ၊ တောင်၊ ပါ၊ လို့ ’ are added to a verb or an adjective, other particles are also used to denote meaning, support meaning or emphasize meaning.

V. Noun/ Pronoun + မို့ / မို့လို့ suffixed particles = support nouns

In utterances, the particles ‘မို့’ ‘မို့လို့’ are suffixed to a noun or a pronoun. In Myanmar dictionary;

‘ မို့, part[colloq] ’ suffixed to a noun carrying the sense of because (it was you) (p.272) ‘ မို့လို့, part[colloq] the same as ‘ မို့ ’ (p.272)

It should be noted that in written language, the conjunctions ‘ဖြစ်သောကြောင့်၊ ဖြစ်၍’ are used and in spoken language , ‘ မို့ / မို့လို့ ’ are used in these places.

Example: မိန်းကလေးမို့လို့ ပန်းကြိုက်တယ်။
ခင်ဗျားမို့လို့ ဒီဈေးနဲ့ ရောင်းတာ။
သူမို့လို့ လုပ်ရက်တယ်။

In the above utterances, when the noun ‘ မိန်းကလေး ’ and pronouns ‘ ခင်ဗျား၊ သူ ’ are suffixed with ‘ မို့, မို့လို့ ’, they become ‘ မိန်းကလေးမို့လို့၊ ခင်ဗျားမို့လို့၊ သူမို့လို့ ’ which carry the meanings’ because you are not a boy’, ‘because it’s you, because it’s him” respectively.

VI. Noun/Verb + ဝဲ suffixed particle= 1. For emphasis
2. For restriction of a verb’s meaning

In Myanmar language, the particle ‘ ဝဲ ’ is suffixed to a Noun or a Verb in an utterance. In Myanmar dictionary,

- P-216. ဝဲ 1. part[colloq] particle used for emphasis
- ဝဲ 2. particle used to restrict the meaning of a verb.

Example: 1. လူဝဲ၊ နတ်ဝဲ။
2. အိပ်ဝဲ အိပ်နိုင်လွန်းတယ်။
3. စားရုံဝဲ စားတယ်။

In example sentence (1), the particle ‘ ဝဲ ’ is suffixed to the Nouns ‘ လူ၊ နတ် ’ and emphasize their meaning as being ‘ လူဖြစ်ကြောင်း ’(human) or ‘ နတ်ဖြစ်ကြောင်း ’(celestial being). In example sentence (2), by adding the suffixed particle ‘ ဝဲ ’ to the verb ‘ အိပ် ’, the meaning of the verb is restricted. It carries the meaning of doing nothing except ‘ အိပ်ခြင်း ’(sleeping). Similarly, in example (3), the meaning is only restricted to nothing but ‘ စားခြင်း ’ (eating) .

In Myanmar spoken language, it is found that particles are also added to a phrase or a sentence.

VII. phrase/ sentence + တဲ့ suffixed particle = meaning is denoted as reported speech

In Myanmar dictionary;

‘ တဲ့ ’ part[colloq] 1. Describe as a reported speech

Example: 1. ဖိုးဖိုးက ကိတ်မုန့်စားမယ်တဲ့။

Grandpa said he wanted to eat cake.

2. ဆရာမက စာအုပ်ပေးလိုက်ပါတဲ့။

The teacher asked me to give the book.

In the above examples, by adding suffixed particle ‘ တဲ့ ’ to the phrases ‘ စားမယ် ’ and ‘ ပေးလိုက်ပါ ’, speeches of grandpa and teacher are reported to the other person. The suffix ‘ တဲ့ ’ in spoken language has the same meaning as the particles ‘ သည့်၊ သော ’ in written language.

Conclusion

This paper studies the suffixed particles used in daily expressions of Myanmar language. There are written form and spoken forms for communication in a language. Written language is used as an official language, to make a record or to give some information. When people communicate with each other personally, reporting events and sharing feeling, they usually use spoken language. When people communicate using a language, they usually use particular sounds or words to emphasize meaning or what they want to say.

The grammatical structures of spoken language and written language have some similarities as well as differences. Parts of speech such as noun, pronoun, verb, adverb and adjective are used differently in written and spoken languages. It was found that the particles under study in this research , “ တာ၊ တောင်၊ ဝါ၊ လို့၊ မို့၊ မို့လို့၊ ဝဲ၊ တဲ့ ” are not used in written language and they are used only in spoken language.

Of all these particles, the suffix ‘ တာ ’ can change the word class. The suffix ‘တောင်’ is used for emphasis and the suffixed particles ‘ ဝါ၊ လို့၊ မို့၊ မို့လို့၊ ဝဲ ’ can support, modify and emphasize the meaning of a particular word. It was also found that the suffixed particle ‘တဲ့’ can be used to express as a reported speech.

From this study, it was discovered that the use of suffixed particles is very effective and they are used only in daily Myanmar spoken language. The findings from this study can help the foreign learners of Myanmar language to use grammatically correct language. It can also be included in the syllabus to help teachers teaching Myanmar language to foreign learners.

ကျမ်းကိုးစာရင်း

ခင်မင်၊ မောင်(ခေဖြူ)။ (၂၀၁၄)။ ဘာသာအမြင် စာပေအမြင်၊ ဒုတိယအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံစာအုပ်တိုက်။

ခင်မင်၊ မောင်(ခေဖြူ)။ (၂၀၁၈)။ မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါသင်ကြားရေး၊ ပထမအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတိုင်းရင်းသားဘာသာစကားဦးစီးဌာန။

ဖေမောင်တင်၊ ဦး။ (၁၉၆၁)။ မြန်မာဝါကျဖွဲ့ထုံးကျမ်း၊ စတုတ္ထအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

မောင်မောင်လေး၊ ဒေါက်တာ။ (၂၀၁၇)။ စကားထဲကသဒ္ဒါ၊ မန္တလေး၊ လင်းသန့်စာပေ။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။ (၂၀၁၈)။ မြန်မာအဘိဓာန်၊ ဒုတိယအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ နေလင်းပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။ (၂၀၁၄)။ မြန်မာ-အင်္ဂလိပ်အဘိဓာန်၊ စကားသမအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်များပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။ (၂၀၁၆)။ မြန်မာသဒ္ဒါ၊ တတိယအကြိမ်။ ရန်ကုန်၊ မြန်မာစာနှင့်ဘာသာစကားပညာရေးဦးစီးဌာန။

အောင်မြင့်ဦး၊ ဒေါက်တာ။ (၂၀၁၅)။ ဘာသာစကားသုတေသန။ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဓူပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။