

A Study of Compound Nouns in the Names of Traditional Cuisines in Myanmar

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Abstract

Many important components in language can be explored through the study of morphological process. The study of morphological process includes the study of neologism, morphemes, affixes and the structure of words. This paper focuses on the study of compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar in terms of morphological process. The objectives are to identify the structure of compound nouns in the traditional cuisine names, to explore unit modifiers, to classify types of compound nouns used in traditional cuisine names and to present a list of traditional cuisine names of ethnic groups in Myanmar. The data were collected from 9 hotels and 3 restaurants in Naypyitaw. The data were analyzed by using the theories proposed by Delahunty & Garvey (2010) and Lieber. (2009). The results showed that most of the cuisine names were composed of compound nouns. It was found that traditional cuisine names in Myanmar are comprised of endocentric compounds, exocentric compounds, and coordinative compounds. Based on the results, the study can highlight what types of structures are used in the names of traditional cuisines and give a collection of the list of traditional cuisine names by eight major ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Key words: Traditional cuisine names in Myanmar, compound nouns structures, unit modifiers, compound types

Introduction

Myanmar which is situated in the South East Asia has unique culture and tradition to explore in terms of language usage. Myanmar food can express significant traditional aspects. The oily curries, crispy fries, tomato sauces, and salads are the most common foods in Myanmar and they attract tourists' interest as they are different from other Asian food and European food. Ethnic groups who live in various parts of Myanmar have significant styles of cuisines.

To reveal the names of traditional cuisine of each ethnic group, it is essential to explore food menus. Hence, the data are gathered from hotels and restaurants in Naypyitaw. The variables of the same cuisine names have been found on the internet. For the study, the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar have been analyzed in terms of studying language components. Morphological aspects: the structure of compound nouns, unit modifiers, and compound types found in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar have been focused on in this research. According to Delahunty and Garvey (2010), compounds are comprised of two or more words or more accurately two or more roots. Lieber (2009) suggested that compounds are not restricted to two bases. In compounding, a compound of two bases can be joined with another base and this is compounded with another base to obtain a very complex compound. He classified compound into two types based on its semantic relationship which are namely endocentric and exocentric compounds. Compounds in which both constituents are heads can be defined as coordinative compounds (Delahunty and Garvey, 2010, p.135). The author of "Style Manual; An official guide to the form and style of Federal Government publishing" (2016) claimed that "A compound word is a union of two or more words, either with or without a hyphen" (p. 97). It is necessary to clarify how traditional Myanmar cuisine names are made up of and which constituents are

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involved. This is because the present research aims to investigate compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar. The objectives are to identify the structure of compound nouns in the traditional cuisine names, to explore unit modifiers, to classify types of compound nouns used in traditional cuisine names and to present a list of traditional cuisine names of ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Many researchers have already studied about foods using various theories. Ningsih and Rosain (2013) examined types and processes of compound words used in headline news columns in the Jakarta post newspaper using the theory proposed by Delahunty and Garvey (2010). The result showed that there were 71 compound nouns, 14 compound verbs, and 29 compound adjectives. Based on the meaning, 48 words of the endocentric compound from 71 compound nouns, 9 words of the exocentric compound from 14 and 22 words of the endocentric one from 29 compound adjectives.

Christianto (2020) investigated types of compound words in English and the lexical categories using the theories of Bauer (2003) and O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba (1996). The results showed that three types of compound word: mainly endocentric compound, exocentric compound, and copulative compound were found. It was found that three lexical categories: compound noun, compound verb and compound adjective were analyzed.

Astiandani (2020) investigated morphological process of compound words of food and beverages names in J Co Donut & Coffee using theories of Lieber (2009), and Delahunty and Garvey (2010). The result showed that food and beverage contain compound nouns, compound adjectives, and neo-classical compound. In semantic types and meanings, endocentric compound with transparent meaning and exocentric compound with opaque meaning were found. To our knowledge, there is no research that investigate traditional cuisine names in Myanmar although there are many researches that study compound noun in foods and beverage names. Furthermore, it is expected that the list of each ethnic group's cuisine names can highlight the traditional culinary style of each ethnic group.

Research Methodology

In this section, how to collect the data, data analyzing procedure and theoretical framework for analyzing compound noun structures, unit modifiers and compound types were presented.

This paper only focused on the study of compound nouns found in the traditional cuisine names of eight major ethnic groups in Myanmar. Almost all of the names were analyzed based on morphological processes. The primary data were collected from hotels, and restaurants. Secondary resources that included English-Myanmar versions of traditional cuisine names in Myanmar were from internet sources. Although 151 traditional cuisine names of eight major groups were obtained, 142 out of 151 could be applied for analysis. Multi-stage approach was used to collect and analyze the data. Firstly, the data were collected from 3 restaurants on Ayeyarwaddy Road and 9 hotels from hotel zone (2) in Naypyidaw. During the collection, the data were compiled by asking permission step by step, from the hotel reception to an authority person. Then, the additional data were collected from some websites and google for about one month. After collecting the data completely, they were categorized into the respective ethnic groups. The data were analyzed according to the theories of compound noun structures proposed by Delahunty & Garvey (2010), unit modifiers by the United States Government Printing Office Style Manual (2016), and compound types by Lieber (2009). The following model has been used to analyze the data in the study.

	N + N	Delahunty & Garvey (2010)
	Adj + N	
Compound structure	Adj + N + N	GPO Style Manual (2016)
	N + N + N	
	Complex	Lieber (2009)
	Two-word unit modifier	
Unit modifier	More than two-word unit modifier	GPO Style Manual (2016)
	Exocentric Compound	
Compound type	Endocentric Compound	Lieber (2009)
	Coordinative Compound	

Data Analysis

- i. Kachin Biryani (ကချင်ခဲပေါက်) (Adj + N) / Endocentric Compound (Variable 1)

The compound word ‘Kachin Biryani’ is composed of Kachin (Adj) + Biryani (N). ‘Kachin Biryani’ is an endocentric compound because the meaning of the compound word ‘Kachin Biryani’ represents a kind of biryani in which Kachin refers to an ethnic group in Myanmar. The whole meaning of the compound bases on that of its head and not on the meaning of its modifier.

- ii. Jinghpaw Shat Jam (ကချင်ခဲပေါက်) (N + N + N) / Two-word unit modifier/ Exocentric compound (Variable 3)

The compound word ‘Jinghpaw Shat Jam’ is also a proper noun of Kachin ethnic group in Myanmar. Thus, people from other countries can determine it as a kind of jam but not a kind of biryani because of the meaning of the word ‘Jam’. In English word, ‘Jam’ is a kind of jam that is a sweet and soft food made from boiled fruit and sugar to preserve it. Thus, it can be regarded as an exocentric compound.

- iii. Kayin assorted veggies soup (ကရင်သီးစုံဟင်း) (Complex / more than two-word unit modifier / Endocentric Compound) (Variable 1)

The compound word ‘Kayin assorted veggies soup’ is composed of Kachin (Adj) + assorted (Adj) + veggies (N)+ soup (N) as a complex structure. In the compound word ‘Kayin assorted veggies soup’, ‘Kayin assorted veggies’ is more than two-word unit modifier that works together to modify the noun ‘soup’. The compound word ‘veggies soup’ is an endocentric compound because the meaning of the compound word ‘veggies soup’ represents a kind of soup in which veggies refer to a type of soup.

- iv. Elephant apple Mon curry (သပြေသီးမွန်ချက်) (Complex / more than two-word unit modifier / Exocentric Compound) (Variable 2)

The compound word ‘Elephant apple Mon curry’ is composed of N + N + Adj + N as a complex compound. This compound word consists of more than a two-word unit modifier. In this word, ‘Elephant apple’ is an exocentric compound

because it denotes a type of specific fruit, not a type of apple associated with an elephant.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the results of the data collected from hotel, restaurant menus, and online resources using descriptive methodology. After collecting the data from hotel, restaurant menus, and online resources, compound noun structures, unit modifiers, and compound types were analyzed and shown by bar charts. Percentage distributions of some findings are exemplified as follows:

Table (1) Percentage Distribution of Compound Structure, Unit Modifier and Compound Type Found in Kachin Cuisine Names

Kachin			
Compound Structure	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
N + N	-	-	-
Adj + N	5%	-	-
Adj + N + N	19%	37%	-
N + N + N	9%	-	25%
Complex	67%	63%	75%
Unit Modifier	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
Two-word unit modifier	33%	38%	25%
More than two-word unit modifier	62%	63%	75%
Compound	5%	-	-
Compound Type	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
Exocentric Compound	-	38%	25%
Endocentric Compound	81%	50%	50%
Coordinative Compound	14%	13%	-
Other	5%	-	25%

Source: Own Compilation

As can be seen in table 1, complex was the most common compound structure in all variables at 67%, 63% and 75% respectively. The 'Adj + N + N' structure was the second common ones at 19% in variable 1 and 37% in variable 2. The 'N + N', 'Adj + N' and 'N + N + N' structures were not found in variable 2. Regarding unit modifier, it can be seen that more than two-word unit modifier was the prominent item in all variables, at 62%, 63% and 75% respectively. Two-word unit modifier was ranked second in all variables. Compound which does not include modifier was the least item at 5%. In compound type, endocentric compound was the highest compound type in all variables, at 81% and 50% respectively followed by exocentric compound, at 38% in variable 2 and 25% in variable 3. Coordinative compound was the third place with 14% in variable 1 and 13% in variable 2. The other was the least type which cannot be regarded as compound such as 'Me Bhu', 'Mont Di' and 'Mohinga'. Therefore, it was found that most of

compound nouns found in Kachin cuisine names were complex and were comprised of more than two-word unit modifier. Most compound found in Kachin cuisine names were endocentric compound.

Table (2) Percentage Distribution of Compound Structure, Unit Modifier and Compound Type Found in Kayah Cuisine Names

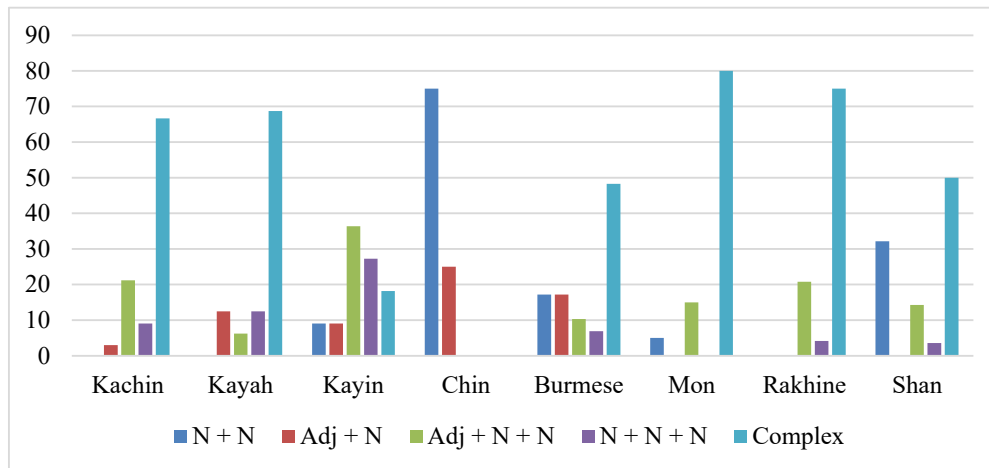
Kayah			
Compound Structure	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
N + N	-	-	-
Adj + N	13%	-	-
Adj + N + N	7%	-	-
N + N + N	13%	-	-
Complex	67%	-	-
Unit Modifier	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
Two-word unit modifier	33%	-	-
More than two-word unit modifier	53%	-	-
Compound	13%	-	-
Compound Type	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3
Exocentric Compound	33%	-	-
Endocentric Compound	53%	-	-
Coordinative Compound	13%	-	-

Source: Own Compilation

According to the table 2, the most common structure was complex, at 67%. The structure 'Adj + N' and 'N + N + N' were equally percentage, at 13%. 'Adj + N + N' was the least structure, at 7% and 'N + N' structure was not found. Regarding unit modifier, it was obvious that more than two-word unit modifier was the highest, at 53% followed by two-word unit modifier at 33%. Among compound type, endocentric compound was the prominent item, at 53% and exocentric compound was ranked second, at 33% in Kayah cuisine names. Coordinative compound was the least item with 13%. Thus, according to the table 2, most of compound structure found in Kayah cuisine names were complex and they compose of more than two-word unit modifier. And most of compound found in Kayah cuisine names were endocentric compound.

The following figures show percentage distribution of compound structures, unit modifiers and compound types found in traditional cuisine names of 8 ethnic groups.

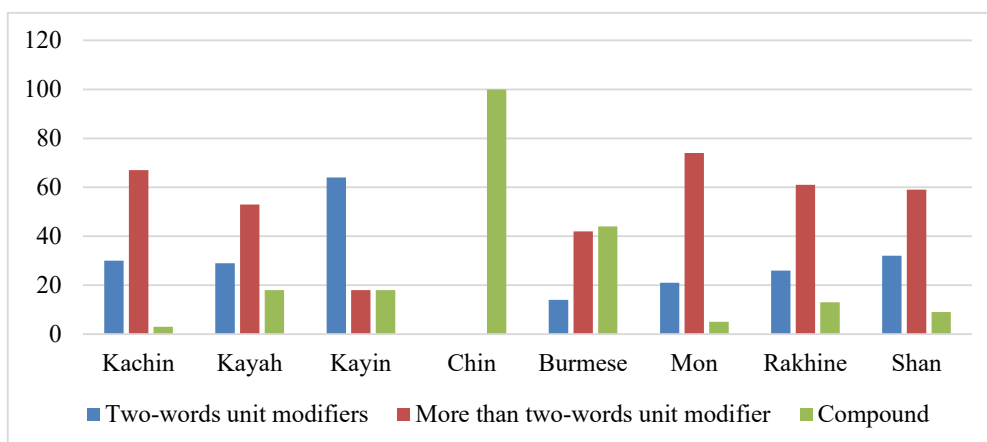
Figure (1) Percentage Distribution of Compound Noun Structures in the Names of Traditional Cuisine of 8 Ethnic Groups



Source: Own Compilation

Figure 1 provides information about the overall compound noun structures in all ethnic groups. The complex structure ranks the highest in Mon traditional ethnic cuisine names. The second most common complex names appear in Rakhine cuisine names. The N + N structure is most frequently found in Shan cuisine names, while the second highest occurrence of N + N structure is in the Burmese category. The Adj + N structure is most common in Burmese cuisine names and the second most common in Kayah cuisine names. Adj + N + N is most frequent in Kayin cuisine names, significantly dominating the bar chart. N + N + N is also most common in Kayin cuisine names. Some categories: N + N structure is absent in Kachin and Kayah cuisine names, and Adj + N + N, N+N+N and complex structures are missing in Chin.

Figure (2) Percentage Distribution of Unit Modifiers in the Names of Traditional Cuisine of 8 Ethnic Groups

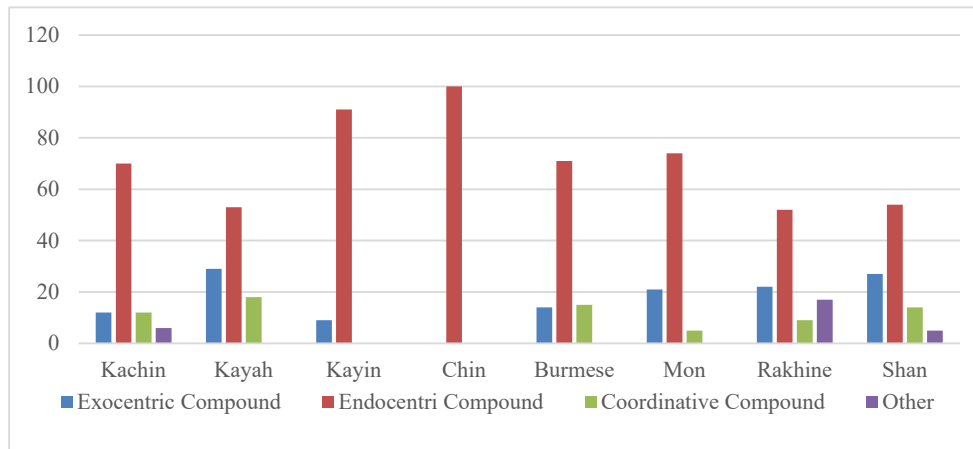


Source: Own Compilation

Figure 2 provides information about the overall modifiers in all ethnic groups. Notably, Chin cuisine names are missing two-word unit modifier types, but compound

(one-word modifier) ranks the highest. Two-word unit modifiers are most commonly found in Kachin and Shan cuisines. The second most common two-word unit modifier appears in Rakhine cuisine, while the third most common type is found in Mon cuisine names. Compound (one-word modifier) is the most frequent in Kayah and Kayin cuisines and the second most common in Rakhine cuisine.

Figure (3) Percentage Distribution of Compound Types in the Names of Traditional Cuisine of 8 Ethnic Groups



Source: Own Compilation

The bar chart gives information about percentage distribution of compound types in traditional cuisine names by 8 ethnic groups. In general, it can be seen that endocentric compound was the highest compound type in all cuisine names of 8 ethnic groups. Exocentric compound and coordinative compound were ranked second in Kachin cuisine names. The other was the least type which cannot be regarded as exocentric compound, endocentric compound and coordinative compound. Endocentric compound was the highest compound type in Kayah cuisine names, at 53% followed by endocentric compound at 29%. Coordinative compound was the least item at 18%. Coordinative compound and other were not found in Kayin cuisine names. Regarding Chin cuisine names, except endocentric, the other compound types were not found. Exocentric compound and coordinative were almost equally percentage, at 14% and 15% respectively in Burmese cuisine names. Exocentric compound was almost equally percentage, at 21% and 22% respectively in Mon and Rakhine cuisine names. All kinds of compound types were found in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan cuisine names. Moreover, exocentric compound and coordinative compound were not found in Chin cuisine names.

Discussion

Based on the investigation, it is obvious that most of the compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines are endocentric compounds in which one element serves as the head and the whole meaning of the compound is based on its head (e.g., ‘curry’ in ‘chicken curry’ and ‘salad’ in ‘rice salad’). Moreover, some cuisine names: ‘fermented sweet rice with glutinous rice ball’ and ‘Kachin type chicken in earthen pot’ which include prepositional phrases are regarded as complex compounds and described as ‘ကြက်ဥကစော်ဟင်း’ and ‘ကြက်ကချင်မြေအိုး’ in Myanmar. The compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar are usually composed of two or more elements which may be nouns or adjectives that convey a particular kind of food. For example, ‘fried catfish’, a specific type of fish, is a compound of ‘fried’ (Adj) and ‘catfish’(N). The combination of

these two constituents provides an explanation of main ingredients in the cuisines. Another example is ‘Shan noodle’ in which the word ‘Shan’ refers to ‘ethnic group’ and ‘noodle’ means ‘a food in the form of long, thin strips made from flour or rice, water, and often egg’.

Unit modifiers in the names of traditional cuisines describe the ingredient type, preparation method, and even a particular regional feature. For instance, in the compound word ‘Kachin chicken curry’, the word ‘Kachin’ is a modifier which indicates the region ‘Kachin’ in Myanmar. The presence of such unit modifiers not only highlights detailed information about the dish but also emphasizes the diversity of Myanmar’s culinary style.

Regarding the compound types, in an endocentric compound, its referent and its head referent are always the same. For example, the compound word ‘vegetable soup’ in Myanmar ‘သီးရွက်နံ့တင်း’ is an endocentric compound as the meaning of the word ‘soup’ represents a type of food while the word ‘vegetable’ serves as modifier which is a kind of soup. Therefore, the whole meaning of the compound based on that of its head and not on the meaning of its modifier.

The compound type which is not easily categorized very often is exocentric compound. For instance, the compound word ‘featherback’ in Myanmar ‘ငါးဖဝါ’ is an exocentric compound as the meaning of the word ‘featherback’ represents a kind of fish not a kind of feather or back.

The coordinative compounds, different from the normal compound types, have the coordinative or two heads. As can be seen in “rice and egg soup”, “rice and egg” is coordinative compound. Moreover, the hyphenated word ‘spicy-sour’ is also found as a coordinative compound in the study. This means that it is also spicy and sour. This is also regarded as copulative.

The usage of the compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar is more than a linguistic oddity as it reflects the culture’s deep relationship to its culinary preparation. These names typically capture not just the ingredients and cooking techniques but also the regional diversity and historical influences that have shaped Myanmar’s food culture. For example, the use of salad, curry, spicy and fermented products in these compounds indicate the geographical and climate features in Myanmar. Therefore, the presence of compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines in Myanmar demonstrates the relationship between the language, culture and food. It is found through the study that culinary traditions are deeply related to the respective society.

Conclusion

The study of the names of traditional cuisine in Myanmar can provide the structure of Myanmar food names, the use of language components in cuisine names in English and in Myanmar. It is found that the Myanmar traditional cuisines could be seen in the various mediums and varied according to their origins. The compound structures, unit modifiers and compound types are analyzed in this research. It can be concluded that the modifiers play an essential role in describing types of cuisine names by ethnic groups. In this paper, it was found that more than two-word unit modifier is more prominent than two-word unit modifier in the names of traditional cuisine. Overall, the complex structure, more than two-word unit modifier and endocentric compound are the most prominent items in the names of traditional cuisine. The least items are ‘Adj + N’ structure, two-word unit modifier and other.

All in all, by investigating compound structures, unit modifiers and compound types, it can be seen how language effectively reflects the essence of Myanmar's varied and rich culinary traditions. Furthermore, the present research contributes to a collection of the traditional cuisines of eight ethnic groups in Myanmar although the research focuses on investigating the compound nouns in terms of morphological process. Therefore, this research may be helpful for those who are interested in Myanmar traditional food. The cuisine names are all described as English and Myanmar languages. Since the research studied the compound nouns in the names of traditional cuisines by eight ethnic groups, the other language components may also be for further study.



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APPENDIX: Traditional Cuisine Names

Kachin Traditional Cuisine Names	
	ကချင်ဒံပေါက် - Kachin Biryani
	စီပါ - Kachin traditional vegetable curry
Kayah Traditional Cuisine Names	
	ကယားဝက်အူချောင်းကြော် - Deep fried Kayah pork sausage
	ကြက်ဟင်းထုပ် - Steamed chicken curry with spring onion
Kayin Traditional Cuisine Names	
	ကရင်တာလပေါဟင်းရည် - Kayin Talabaw
	ကရင်သီးစုံဟင်း - Kayin assorted veggies soup
Chin Traditional Cuisine Names	
	မဲဘု - Meh Buh
	ဆာဗူသီး - Sabuti



Burmese Traditional Cuisine Names

	<p>လက်ဖက်သုပ် - Tea leaf salad</p>
	<p>မုန့်ဟင်းခါး - Rice noodle with fish soup</p>



Mon Traditional Cuisine Names

	<p>သပြေသီးမွန့်ချက် - Mon curry with elephant apple</p>
	<p>မွန့်ရိုးရာငပိထောင်း - Mashed fish paste, Mon style</p>

Rakhine Traditional Cuisine Names

	<p>ကိုအဏ္ဏဝါ / ကိုတံငါငါးချက် - Seafood fisherman dish</p>
	<p>ရခိုင်မုန့်တီ - Rice noodle dish served in soup form</p>

Shan Traditional Cuisine Names

	<p>ရှမ်းခေါက်ဆွဲ - Shan noodle</p>
	<p>ရှမ်းထမင်းချဉ် (သို့) ငါးထမင်းနယ် - Shan fish and tomato paste rice</p>