

A Study on Some Dialects of Kyaukpadaung Region

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Abstract

In the past half –century, dialectal variation has witnessed a noticeable progress. This progression leads to consider the dialectal variation as a very important aspect of research in sociolinguistics. This study concentrate on dialect and language in general, it also explains the differences between standard language and dialect, and it shows how a particular dialect is used in a specific region and it is considered as an identity as well, it aimed to show not only some variations in pronunciation and vocabulary but also the differences in the use of tenses or grammar patterns used in the dialect of this region.

Key words: language variation, standard language, dialect

Introduction

In this world, every language has language variation phenomenon. Variation is far from being a defect of a language; it is true that human being language is governed system in which a huge amount of creativity which is one of the important characteristics of language is possible. Variation is a neutral operation, and linguists could not prove that non-standard language (dialect) is less enough by means of communication than what is called standard language. Every language has its varieties or dialects, when a certain variety of a language is used according to the users then it is called dialect, dialects are normally determined by speaker's geographical background, O Grady et al. Defines dialect as "A regional or social variety of a language characterized by its own phonological, syntactical, and lexical properties". Dialect is a distinctive form of a language, it is associated with some social regional, group and ethnic, it differs from other varieties of a language by its own linguistic features such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar. Dialect in the classical form is a dialect of certain region; dialect is different way of saying the same thing where it reflects the social structure as gender, class origin. In this paper, we focus on the dialect used in Kyaukpadaung region. It shows that not only variations in pronunciation and vocabulary but also the difference in the use of tense or grammar occurs in the dialect of this region. In this paper, we collect these data from the resident people in Kyaukpadaung region.

Aim

This paper is aimed to show not only some variations in pronunciation and vocabulary but also the differences in the use of tenses or grammar patterns used in the dialect of this region.

Objectives

- 1) To explain the development of standard language.
- 2) To identify language variations and language differences mostly found in Kyaukpadaung region.

Theoretical Background

In this section, some language variations and language differences are shown.

Language and Dialect

Although people use the terms language and dialect quite freely in speech, they are ambiguous terms. They sometimes assume that a dialect is almost no more than a local non-prestigious (powerless) variety of a real language. The term dialect came from the Greek word *dialektos* and it means a variety of a language characteristic of a particular group of the language's speakers. The term is applied most often to regional speech patterns, but a dialect may also be defined by other factors, such as social class.

In popular usage, the word "dialect" is sometimes used to refer to a lesser-known language (most commonly a regional language), especially one that is unwritten or not standardized. This use of the word dialect is often accompanied by the erroneous belief that the minority language is lacking in vocabulary, grammar, or importance.

A dialect is distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (phonology, including prosody). Where a distinction can be made only in terms of pronunciation, the term accent is appropriate, not *dialect* (although in common usage, "dialect" and "accent" are usually synonymous).

Language Variation

No human language is stable, unvarying or uniform; all languages present internal differences. Actual usage varies from people to people, and user to user, in terms of the pronunciation, or the choice of lexicon and the meaning of those lexicons, and even the use of syntactic rules. To show a known example, American's speech vary from the speech of the British, it is noticed too that the speech of these two groups in turn is distinct from the speech used in Australia. If a language is used differently by two different groups, they are often said to speak different dialects of the language. It is important to know that dialects are never purely social, or purely ethnic or purely regional. In the identification of dialects, regional, social, and ethnic factors are combined and intersected in various ways. Language variation does not end with the term dialects. Dialect of a language can be considered internal variation: not two speakers of a language, even if they speak the same dialect or variety, use and produce their language in the same way. We notice that variation in language is pervasive, it is obvious that there is no such thing as a single language used at all times by all speaker or users.

Standard Language

Finegan, Edward (2007) defined Standard Language as "A language variety used by a group of people in their public discourse. Alternatively, varieties become standard by undergoing a process of standardization, during which it is organized for description in grammars and dictionaries and encoded in such reference works". The most important phenomenon of the development of language in historical times has been the establishment of the national common languages — Greek, French, English, German, etc. "standard" languages which have turn away, or are going to turn away the local dialects, most of standard languages are combined varieties that are developed over periods, and which cover characteristics from different dialects. The outcome was a compound recombination of distinctive features from many dialects and a standard norm which is different in structure from its dialectal forms.

The selecting between linguistic alternatives establishes Language standardization. The non-linguistic goal of the "standardization" (e.g. scientific, national unity, or economic advancement,) is most apparent in this place of the process.

Definition of Dialect

Dialect is a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar distribution Wardhaugh (1998:21).

So, it can be said that English, French, London English and football commentaries are varieties of language.

Wardhaugh (1998: 21) also cited that Ferguson (1971, p.30) defines the definition of a variety of language in another way: Anybody of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analysed by available techniques of synchronic description and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all formal contexts of communication.

According to them, a variety of language is a specific set of linguistic items of human speech patterns which can associate with some external factor (a geographical area or a social group). In one of the quotation of Wardhaugh (1998), Hymes (1974, p.123) studied that language boundaries between groups are drawn not on the basis of the use of linguistic items alone, because attitudes and social meanings attached to those items also count.

Haugne (1966a, p. 924-5), quoted by Wardhaugh (1998: 24) explains that the term dialect is used both for local varieties of English and for various types of informal, lower-class or rural speech. So a dialect is often thought of as standing outside the language. He also states that a dialect is a language that is excludes from a polite society. According to Gumperz (1971, p. 56-7), in India, the use of Hindi and Urdu serves to express their social background as well as their social occation.

Types of Dialects

The number of speakers, and the geographical area covered by them, can be of arbitrary size, and a dialect might contain several sub-dialects. A dialect is a complete system of verbal communication (oral or signed, but not necessarily written) with its own vocabulary and grammar.

There are mainly two types of dialects: regional and social dialect. A dialect that is associated with a particular social class can be termed a sociolect. Other speech varieties include: standard languages, which are standardized for public performance (for example, a written standard); jargons, which are characterized by differences in lexicon (vocabulary); slang; patois; pidgins or argots. The particular speech patterns used by an individual are termed an idiolect.

Regional Dialect

Major regional dialects tend to follow geographic boundaries. The basic three dialects in the U.S. include New England, Southern, and Western/General, with sub-dialects branching off from those main categories. The three basic differences can be distinguished in regional dialects as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Social Dialect

Social isolation also influences regional dialects. Those who live in more socially isolated groups (whether because of geographical boundaries like mountains or water, or because of immigrant settlements in urban cities) tend to develop more distinguishing speech patterns than those who interact with a larger number of people. Apart from regional and social dialects, there are also two other types: minority dialect and indigenized variety.

Minority Dialect

Sometimes, members of a particular minority ethnic group have their variety which they use as a marker of identity, usually alongside a standard variety. This is called a minority dialect. Examples are African American Vernacular English in the USA, London Jamaican in Britain, and Aboriginal English in Australia.

Dialect and Region

In the advanced nations, region no longer maintains its seniority. A lot of changes in urbanization, mobility, embourgeoisement, literacy and other social factors have led to a strict leveling of regional dialects and accents. Labov (1972) says "My own studies of on-going linguistic changes indicate that dialect diversification is continuing...in spite of close contact among the social groups involved".

For more than a century, dialectologists were originally concerned in where their informants lived, and they started out their fieldworkers accordingly, from Edmond Edmond moving by cycle through the French rural areas collecting data for the Atlas linguistique de France in 1896-1900 to Raven I. Mc David motoring around the eastern seaside of the United States collecting field records for the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and Southern Atlantic States from 1945 to 1949. And for those years, dialectology was basically dialect geography considering region as an independent variable. Warielis and the other founders of dialectology were convinced about the relationship between dialect variety and local landscape. In eighteenth century philosophers believed that language was an organic, natural, entity, like a plant, and its variation was believed to have the same source as the diversity of

vegetation. It's just like vegetable life took on distinctly different appearances according to the soil and climate that nourished it so languages took on obviously different features in different climates.

Methodology

This research has been done to show not only some variations in pronunciation and vocabulary but also the differences in the use of tenses or grammar patterns used in the dialect of this region. In this paper, some variations and differences used in Kyaukpadaung region are analyzed with the standard language Finegan, Edward (2007).

Findings and Discussion

Some language variations and language differences can be found in Kyaukpadaung region. For example, a young lady is called in different ways as *bokema*, *meikala*, and a young man as *lulay*, *koyin* by their elders who are in the same age as their parents and above.

Sometimes, grammatical differences by the structure of a sentence are also found in some dialects. For instance, some Southerners would say "I might could mow the lawn today," meaning the same thing as "I could mow the lawn today." Or in Pennsylvania, people typically say "the car needs washed," instead of "the car needs to be washed."

Here the grammatical difference is related to the use of modal auxiliaries

Such kind of grammatical difference is also found in the dialects of Kaukpaduang region. The difference depends largely on the tone of the speaker.

e.g. Have you bought a dress for me?

The answer for this question might be "I didn't buy it" or it might be like "I haven't bought it yet" if the speaker wants to deny it. Depending on the mood of the speaker, the reply may vary as follows:

ဝယ်ဝါလိမ့်မယ်အားကြီးကြီး။ (I don't want to buy.)

The speaker seems to express his/ her incapability in buying it as he may not have enough money or it's too expensive.

ဝယ်ဝင်တော့မယ်စောင့်နေ။ (I'm going to buy it.g)

The speaker seems to be angry with his/ her interlocutor as he may have insulted with the speaker.

In these two sentences, the modal auxiliary "လိမ့်မယ်" (will) and "ဝင်တော့မယ်" mean the same as "will" and "going to". So, it can be said that the use of future tense instead of past tense can also be found in the dialects of Kyaukpadaung region.

Moreover, pronunciation causes the same words to sound different based on how someone pronounces them. In the South, the words "pin" and "pen" sound identical, and in the Northeast you might not hear the "r" in the word "car", or you might hear a blurred "w" sound instead of a hard "r" sound in the word "born". You might hear people say that Southerners speak

with a drawl and Mid-Westerners have a nasal twang, or that people from certain areas speak more slowly than others. Unfortunately, these kinds of distinctions can lead to stereotypes and misperceptions.

Such kinds of the alteration of the sounds can also be found in the dialect of Kyaukpadaung region.

For example:

မနုဖန် /manafan/ instead of မနက်ဖန်/manetphan/ (tomorrow)

ကွင်း /kwin/ meaning *the field* instead of ကွမ်း /kun/ (betel leaf)

ရေခွန်း /jeidun/ instead of ရေခွင်း /jeidwin/ (well)

ခွင် /kwin/ instead of ခွန် /kun/ (seven)

These examples show the alteration of vowel sounds from /e/ to /a/, /u/ to /wi/, /wi/ to /u/ and /u/ to /wi/.

Moreover, most of the village people in this region pronounce the interdental / / as alveolar /t/. You will hear အတစ် instead of အသစ်, တူတို့ instead of သူတို့, တွားပြီ instead of သွားပြီ .

Such kind of pronunciation gives rise to ridicule and also to humour. According to Moody (1970:101), many writers and entertainers have exploited this feature of language, though it may be suspected that their dialects have not always been accurate representations of actual forms of speech.

In the context of Kyaukpadaung region, there are usually *Anyein Pwes* in novitiation ceremony. They are usually performed the nights before the ceremony. In these performances, there are usually a dancer and two clowns who perform the audience with the help of Myanmar Saing-waing. The dancer performs the audience with Myanmar traditional dance with Myanmar songs and the clowns have to make jokes whenever a piece of dance has finished. Their jokes sometimes include the dialect of that region and the misinterpretation of the interlocutors, making the audience feel amused.

e.g.

ငါ့ကို အတစ်ပေး။

ငါ့မှာ အသားတုံး မရှိဘူး။

The speaker wants to ask for a new one but his pronunciation makes the listener to interpret it as a piece of meat.

မနက်ကြီးကျမှ တွေ့တာပေါ့။

မနက် ကလေးက ဘယ်မှာလဲ။

Dialects mostly used in Kyaukpadaung region are shown in table (1).

Table (1) Some of the Dialects in Kyaukpadaung Region

Sr. No	Dialect	Standard language	Meaning
1	စစ္စဘန်း	သစ္စပန်း	a kind of flower
2	တိုလီမိုလီ	ပစ္စည်းမျိုးစုံ	variety kinds of things
3	ပက်ဆပ်	ပိုက်ဆံ	money
4	မနက်ကြီး	မနက်စောစော	early morning
5	ဘိန်းဝွင်	ဘိန်းဝွန်	wheel tax
6	ရေခွန်း	ရေတွင်း	well
7	ကွင်းယာ	ကွမ်းယာ	betel
8	ခွင်း	ခွန်း	spoon
9	ဘာလီဂျိုင့်	လက်ဆွဲပုံး	bucket
10	ဝထောင်	ဝါးဆိုင်	bamboo shop
11	မိန်းမသား	အမျိုးသမီး	woman
12	ယောက်ကျသား	အမျိုးသား	man
13	အိမ်ပိုင်း	ခြံ	yard
14	ကျွန်ုပ်	ကျနော်၊ ကျမ	I
15	အဘ	အဖေ	father
16	အမ	အမေ	mother
17	မာလကာသီး	မာကလာသီး	guavana
18	အမောင်	အကိုကြီး	elder brother
19	ကောက်ညှင်း နိုင်းထုပ်	ငှက်ပျောထုပ်	a kind of Myanmar delicacy
20	ဘဒေါက်	နီဆီဗူး	Tin
21	ကျောက်လှည့်	ဝက်အူလှည့်	screw driver
22	မောင်ပု	ကောင်လေး	boy
23	မပု	ကောင်မလေး	girl
24	တုံးလုံးလဲ့	ကျောခင်း	lie
25	ဟုတ်ပါလိမ့် မယ်	မဟုတ်ဘူး	no
26	အရီး	ဘကြီး	uncle
27	ထတော	ထန်းတော	group of toddy palm
28	ထပင်မြစ်	ထန်းပင်မြစ်	root of toddy palm
29	မရီး	မြေအိုး	pot

30	ကြောင်မိန်	ကြောင်	cat
31	သုတ်၊ ဗျင်း	ရိုက်	beat
32	ဝါးကြော	စားသောက်ပွဲ သွားရန်ရှိ	have something to be eaten
33	ဆံပင်ကိုက်	ဆံပင်ညှပ်	have the hair cut
34	ပျော်ဟာဘဲ	ပျော်တာဘဲ	be happy
35	ရေသွပ်တယ်	ရေထည့်တယ်	fill water
36	နင်းကန်းသုံး	အရမ်းသုံး	spend too much
37	သွားချေအုံးမှဘဲ	သွားလိုက် အုံးမယ်	will go
38	ဈေးတန်တယ်	ဈေးချိုတယ်	be cheap
39	အံ့ဘူးလား	အံ့ဩ စရာကောင်း	be wonderful
40	နုတ်လှန်ထိုး	ပြန်ပြော	reply rudely
41	ပုံမှားရိုက်	လိမ်ညာ	tell a lie
42	အသားကြီး	မာနကြီး	be proud
43	ရက်စက်တယ်	အလွန်ကောင်း	be very good
44	တအား ကောင်း	အလွန်ကောင်း	be very good
45	ကောင်းချက်	အလွန်ကောင်း	be very good
46	သဝေတိုးနေ	အချိန်ဖြုန်းနေ	spend one's time
47	ဗျိုထိုးတယ်	ရွာဆော်မှ အများ သိစေရန် ဆော်ဩသည်။	Announce by a village crier

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Although language variations and language differences are identified and analyzed in this paper, the standard language used in Myanmar must be learnt as it is important to communicate each other in everywhere.

Conclusion

Most languages which are spread over a wide area produce dialects. Dialects often give rise to social prejudice, to ridicule and to humour. In this paper the use of language variations and language differences of dialects in Kyaukpadaung region is the focus area. It is found that there are some differences in pronunciation as well as in the use of tenses and grammar. Sometimes, these differences may cause misunderstandings among the interlocutors, resulting fun. All in all, to have a smooth flow of communication, all users of a language should be familiar with the standard language.