

CHAPTER ONE

ENGLISH BORROWINGS IN BURMESE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1.0 Introduction

This study investigates English lexical borrowings in the Burmese language and the adaptations they underwent as a part of the process of becoming officially accepted Burmese words. It also sets out to examine the domains of human activity with the lexical borrowings. This chapter examines the problem, explains the background to the problem, presents the aims and significance of the study and its limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

After the First Anglo–Burmese War (1824-1826) and the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852-1853), Burma became a subject of the British crown and established contact with the outside world. Min Latt (1966) states that “with the penetration of British colonialism into Burma in the 19th century, English became a language of importance for the Burmese people” (p.12). During this period of British colonialism, printing presses were imported into Burma in large quantities and more Burmese people had the chance to read and write (Min Latt, 1966, p.24).

By the late nineteenth century, the introduction of printing and the influence of western literary forms saw the rise of new secular genres (Wheatley, 2003, p.196). The first newspapers printed in Burma were in English, beginning with the *Maulmain Chronicle* in 1840 (Allot, Herbert, & Okell, 1989) and the first novel appeared in 1904 (Wheatley, 2003). Since newspapers and printed materials were readily available, literacy in English among the Burmese people increased quickly. This phenomenon became more widespread after World War Two because English language was widely used by that time and it had achieved a status of importance in Burma with the establishment of missionary schools throughout the country. Unlike government schools which used Burmese as the medium of instruction, the missionary schools taught every subject in English except for the compulsory Burmese language subject.

In the universities, lectures were conducted in English rather than in Burmese. This was largely due to certain factors. First, Burmese academics' command of the national language, or their personal knowledge of it, was inadequate for higher education teaching purposes (Min Latt, 1966, p.11). In addition, many of the terms used in the subjects taught at the tertiary level were non-existent in Burmese. Furthermore, it was an extremely difficult task to translate medical, scientific, law and other technical literature and documents into Burmese. Because of the inability of the Burmese language to meet not only the needs of the academia at the tertiary level, but also needs in other domains of human activity, there was lexical borrowing from the English language to fill the gap.

“Borrowing may take place in order to obtain words for genuinely new things”
(Trask, 1994, p.16)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Because of direct English-Burmese contact, the gradual integration of English words into Burmese took place and in the process these words underwent certain linguistic changes, especially in terms of phonology and morphology. This is underscored by Haugen (1972b) who states that “...whenever speakers of different languages or dialects meet, there is language contact and whenever there is such contact, certain typical problems arise” (p 241). Haugen stresses that these linguistic changes would give rise to typical problems.

Resulting from the phonological differences of English and Burmese languages, the phonemic structure of borrowed English words would have undergone changes in the process of assimilation into the Burmese language. Sounds which are similar in Burmese and English would allow certain lexical items to be easily assimilated, while differences in sounds would pose difficulty of production in the process of borrowing, hence these items would undergo different forms of assimilation. Therefore this study is concerned with determining English lexical borrowings which have been integrated into the Burmese language and the various phonemic changes that they have undergone as a result of integration into the official Burmese lexicon.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are to identify English words that were borrowed into the Burmese language and to determine the type of borrowing and the manner of borrowing that had taken place with these words as well as the domains of human activities that had necessitated most borrowings from the English language. Under type of borrowing, the words were categorized into loanwords, loan blends and loanshifts. Under manner of borrowing, the words were grouped under three sub-groupings which are none substitution words, partial substitution words and whole substitution words. When determining the type of borrowing and the manner of borrowing, the items in the corpus were categorized according to Haugen's (1950,1972) formal criteria. Under domains of human activities, the words were selected and grouped into different thematic categories in order to determine which thematic fields furnished most borrowings. Hence the researcher proposed the following research questions:

1. Which type and manner of borrowing occurred most in the Burmese language?
2. Which area of human activity furnished the most borrowings?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Studies on the Burmese language have been quite extensively carried out in the past, both by local and foreign researchers. Among them are *Grammar of the*

Burmese Language (Judson, 1951), *Modernization of Burmese* (Min Latt, 1966), *A Guide to the Romanization of Burmese* (Okell, 1971), *Burmese* (Wheatley, 1987), *Burmese Writing* (Wheatley, 1996), *Burmese Historical Morphology* (Thurgood, 1977) and *The Phonology Of English Loanwords Adaptation On Burmese* (Chang, 2003). Among the researchers mentioned above, only Min Latt and Chang focused on English lexical items in the Burmese language. To this date, little research has been carried out on the phonemic changes that English borrowed words have undergone in its assimilation into the Burmese language. Moreover, it can also be assumed that research on English lexical borrowings based on type of borrowings and manner of borrowings has never been carried out. Therefore, it is the belief of the researcher that this study of the phonemic changes of English borrowed words in Burmese not only enables a better understanding of the type and manner of English lexical borrowings which have become part of the Burmese language but it also stresses the importance of English lexical borrowings in the Burmese language to meet the needs of its society at a particular time.

The increasing use of information technology worldwide has created new demands on any language for communication therefore challenging the lexicon of the Burmese language to be expanded as well. Although most borrowings in Burmese occur spontaneously when the two languages come into contact, expansion of the Burmese lexicon by means of loanwords can be officially planned so as to meet the demands of new technologies and businesses. The

findings of this study would contribute significantly to the type and manner in which such new lexical items could be borrowed effectively from English into the Burmese language.

It is also hoped that this study will generate interest in other scholars to carry out research on lexical borrowings from other languages, other than English, into Burmese in order to understand better the development of the Burmese language as a result of contact with these other languages. Such research would help create greater awareness among scholars on the importance of borrowings.

1.5 Limitations Of The Study

The data for this study was collected from a written source rather than both spoken and written sources as the researcher was unable to return to Myanmar to obtain spoken data from the local Burmese people. Hence the findings of this research could not be generalized to English borrowings which occur in Burmese spoken discourse. As the data collected for this study was from only one source, that is the monolingual dictionary, rather than a variety of written sources, the findings of the study can only be applied to English lexical borrowings which have been officially accepted as Burmese lexical items by the Burmese Language Commission (later became Burmese Language Committee). The researcher recognizes that there are words currently in use by Burmese people in spoken

and written discourse that have been assimilated into the language not included in the dictionary.

1.6 Historical Perspective of the Burmese Language

As this study deals with English lexical borrowings into the Burmese language it is necessary to have first, a historical perspective of the Burmese language and secondly, how other languages came into contact with the Burmese language in its historical development and influenced it (See Section 1.7).

1.6.1 Burma and Its Languages in General

Burma, a vast country with a space of 261,789 square miles (Klein, 1983) is the largest country in the Southeast Asian region. It is a simmering stew of ethnic diversity (Klein, 1983) where the area of the Burmese majority is encircled by separate ethnic states for the Chins, Kachins, Shans, Karens, Kayahs, Arakanese, Mons and many other minority ethnic groups. According to Enriquez (as quoted by Klein), “Burma ... is peopled by so many races that truly we know not how many; nor who they are, nor whence they came. In no other area are the races so diverse, or the languages and dialects so numerous....” (Klein, 1993, p. 75).

What Enriquez wrote is very true. Though the ethnic groups mentioned above accept the Burmese language as the standard and official language, the way they speak it may cause confusion. "Change in pronunciation is largely responsible for the existence of different accents" (Trask, 1994, p.25). Thus, although the various groups speak the Burmese language, it sounds different as a result of different ways of pronouncing the words. Min Latt (1966) explained that "Discord ranges from inessential differences in personal articulatory habits to vital discrepancies which could prevent two persons, each claiming it to be his mother tongue, from understanding each other" (p.44).

Today, Burma is a multi-national state which has a population of around 52 million. According to Wheatley, "About two thirds of its population are Burmans and the other third is made up of a variety of ethnic groups, including other Tibeto-Burman speaking people such as Chin, Naga and Karen. Mon-Khmer people such as the Mon, Padaung and the Shan, whose language is very closely related to that of Thai and other nationalities such as Chinese and Indians who live mostly in towns" (Wheatley, 1987a, p.106). Most of the ethnic groups have their own languages and their own writing systems. They speak their own language within their family and in daily transactions and the Burmese language is used in schools or when dealing with authority and in cross-cultural communication. In this manner Burmese emerges as the language of education and the media, of business and administration, and of communication between ethnic groups (Min Latt, 1966).

Although the Burmese language is now spoken throughout the country, regional speech variations can be detected in terms of dialect, pronunciations and vocabularies (Wheatley, 1987b). These variations can only be attested in colloquial forms but not in written forms. For writing, standard Burmese is used.

1.6.2 Burmese Language

Burmese or, as the people of Burma call it, *Myanmar Ba tha* (the language of Myanmar) was the speech of a considerable and powerful tribe, closely connected with the Tibetans, who prior to A.D. 1000, over-ran the valley of the Irrawaddy River, and adopted Buddhism and the alphabet of its sacred books. These books were written in Pali alphabets which were founded on the ancient characters of India (Klein, 1983). Burmese is one of the earliest Tibeto-Burman languages to develop a writing system (Commission, 1978). Wheatley stated, “Traditionally, it is thought that Mon scribes, brought to the city of Pagan after their capital was sacked by the Burmese king Anawrahta in A.D.1057, provided the stimulus for adapting the Mon script to the writing of Burmese” (Wheatley, 1996, p. 450). It is likely that Mon monks, brought to the Pagan Empire, assisted in adapting their script to the writing of Burmese (Klein, 1983, p. 42).

The Burmese script is an adaptation of the Mon script, which is derived from the Brahmi script (Wheatley, 1987b). It is a syllabic script. Its basic unit is a consonant-based syllable with an inherent /:/ vowel. Burmese is written

horizontally from left to right and it has 33 consonants. Burmese words are formed by using vowel symbols. These symbols are written to the right, left, above and, or below the consonant. Of the 33 consonants, only twenty-nine consonants are in use today but the whole is put into requisition for words borrowed from Pali language. The writing system of 33 Burmese consonants is presented in Appendix A (Table 1), arranged in traditional order (left to right) along with transcriptions. For main vowel and tone combinations see Appendix A (Table 2).

Unlike English, spaces are used to separate phrases not words: a single vertical bar (.) equivalent to the comma, marks a small break, and a double vertical bar (>) equivalent to a full stop, marks the end of a sentence (Judson, 1951). These are the only two punctuations that can be found in the Burmese language.

Burmese is a tonal language (i.e. pitch and pitch contour can change the meanings of words) with three or four tones, depending on the system of categorization: some identify three tones - low, middle and high; or creaky, level and heavy falling - which correspond closely to the Burmese orthographic system; some use four tonal distinctions - creaky, low, high and checked. (Wheatley, 1987), or creaky, low, high and stop (Okell, 1969). The additional one is an abrupt falling tone that occurs before the glottal stop final. Like most of the

languages derived from Sanskrit, Burmese also follows the SOV structure (subject-object-verb), or more precisely is a verb-final language.

As for pronunciation, most Burmese words are pronounced as they are written but with some exceptions, for example, 'plate' in Burmese is written as *yef;uef pangan* but pronounced as *ysh̄ pangan*. The same goes for words like 'table' which when written is *pm;yḠI sar pwe* but when pronounced is *ZyḠI za pwe*, 'plum fruit' which when written is *qD̄;oD̄; see thee* but when pronounced is *ZD̄;oD̄; zee thee*, and 'God' which when written is *bk̄ym; bhuyar* but when spoken is *zym; phayar*. In the same way, Judson (1951) states that *pum; sa-kah;* which means 'language', is pronounced not *sa-kah* but *za-gah*, as if written *Zsg;* (p.12).

1.6.3 Spread of the Burmese Language

The language that originated in Burma's ancestral homeland spread rapidly among Burma's major ethnic groups, the Shan and Mon-Khmer people during the 19th century, when the last Mon Empire had declined and the Irrawaddy Delta Region was opened to rice cultivation (Klein, 1983). Traditionally, Burma is a linguistically diverse area where most of the ethnic groups take pride in possessing their own languages and writing systems. It was in this kind of environment that the Burmese language became the lingua franca and official

language. Thus Burmese has been used as the literary, administrative, religious and court language in Burma. The Burmese language has also been promoted as the medium of instruction as an act of patriotism and as a struggle against an education system based on the English language medium (Min Latt, 1966, p.25).

1.7 Influence of World Languages on the Burmese Language

As seen from the map in Figure 1, one can understand why Burma or Myanmar as it is presently called, is so diverse in terms of language, art, culture and food.



Figure 1. Myanmar and its Neighbours

The reason is that it is surrounded by countries that are immensely rich in culture and history and these countries especially Thailand, China and India are Burma's great trading partners. Most people living in areas that share common borders with other countries, speak and act

like people from those

countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Burmese language has been influenced by Pali, Indian, Chinese, Thai and other languages as a result of its close proximity with these countries. The influence is of course not limited to the

language alone but it is also felt in various aspects of life, like culture, arts, clothing and food.

Another factor that led to the influence of world languages on the Burmese language was the occupation of Burma by foreign powers like the English and Japanese. With English and Japanese occupation, their language, culture and even fashion were easily assimilated into the Burmese culture. Along with the British army came the Indian army and this also caused the language to be influenced by Urdu and Hindi languages. As Urdu and Hindi words were used in spoken language in the society of that time, these words underwent assimilation, integration and transformation processes in the course of general use. It was factors such as these that eventually led to the present situation where the Burmese language shows the influence of many languages it has been in contact with.

1.7.1 Influence of English on the Burmese Language

It was in the 15th century that Europeans began to make inroads into Burma and among them was the famous Portuguese seafarer Vasco da Gama who discovered the sea route from Europe to India and from that period on, foreigners especially the Portuguese made their way into Burma. Only in the 17th century did the Dutch, British and French set up trading companies in ports along the coasts of Burma (Klein, 1983).

Even though these foreigners made their way into Burma, it was merely for trading purposes and their languages made little impact on the Burmese people (Min Latt, 1966, p.14). The only foreign language that had some standing in Burmese society, was English. During the nineteenth century, Burma was in conflict with the British in India. In 1886, after three wars with the British, Burma became a British colony (Saw, 1990). After British colonization in the nineteenth century, English became a language of importance for the Burmese people. During a century and a half of this co-existence, Burmese was still numerically important as it was spoken by the majority of the Burmese people, but English was the superior language and the privileged one (Min Latt, 1966, p.12). It held a position entirely different from that of the other languages which had previously come into contact with Burmese.

English became more prominent when foreign missionaries set up their private schools in big towns and cities. The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was the era where some schools that were managed by European nuns and priests came into existence. During and after the Second World War, more missionary schools were established in many big towns and in the hilly regions. In these missionary schools, the medium of instruction was English (Tinker, 1967) and starting from the primary level, students had to communicate in the English language or face mild penalties for failing to do so. These schools followed the English schools' syllabus and most of

the books were imported from England. In these private schools, a grammar-based approach which emphasized on knowledge of the rules of grammar and a description of the structure of language was practiced. In everyday communication and learning in these English-medium schools, English was extensively used in the teaching of all the subjects. With more people using English in their daily lives, it was not surprising that a mixing of words between these two languages occurred among those who knew the English language.

The mixings involved using English words in speaking Burmese and vice versa. However, it is important to note that the structure of Burmese does not permit mixtures at points a speaker might decide to choose. For instance, English modal verbs or prepositions are never substituted for Burmese auxiliary verbs and prepositions although their semantic values may be almost identical (Min Latt, 1966, p.15). Hence, British rule introduced a large number of words of English origin into Burmese. Many of these were later replaced by Burmese forms, but large numbers remain and new ones continue to appear, particularly in the fields of science, technology, business and politics (Wheatley, 1987b).

Of the many English words in the Burmese language, some words merged so well with the language that the Burmese people today do not even realize that they are borrowed words. For example, words like, 'okay', 'peace', 'thank you', 'sorry', 'cial' (short form of the word 'special') and some official words like 'policy', 'parliament', 'communist', 'democracy', 'socialist', 'party', 'remand, 'company',

'committee', 'commission', 'college', 'tuition', 'video', 'cassette', 'computer', 'software', 'virus', 'internet', 'doctor', 'engineer', 'bus', 'car', 'cake' etc. are so widely used that often the user seems to be unaware of the fact that they are borrowed from English.

In daily conversations, particularly among the same age group, one can observe that pronouns 'I,' and 'you' are widely used in their speech, whereas 'he', 'she', 'they', 'we' are never used. Almost all English words mixed into Burmese conversations are used as nouns; plural markers, however are always Burmese. Min Latt stated, "thus mixing is selectively restricted to some lexical portions of utterances and does not at all affect grammatical structure" (Min Latt, 1966, p.15).

1.7.2 Influence of Pali on the Burmese Language

According to Wheatley (1987a), throughout its history, Burmese has been in contact with other languages such as Pali and Mon in the 12th- 13th centuries, and European languages such as Portuguese, Dutch, British, French, and also Asian languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, Japanese etc, from the 16th to the 20th century. These languages have all influenced mainly the spoken form of Burmese. However Pali had a large influence on the written form of Burmese. Many, possibly half of Burmese words are of Pali origins (the evidence can be

traced in *Myanmar Abidan*). Therefore the dominance and impact of Pali on Burmese language has been quite significant.

Although spoken Burmese belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family, Burmese script is an adaptation of the Mon, which in turn is derived from Pali - the language of Theravada Buddhism - and ultimately from the Brahmi script of eastern India. Pali has been one of the main sources of new lexical material throughout the attested history of Burmese (Wheatley, 1987a). In AD 1057 one of the first Burmese kings, Anawrahta, upon defeating Thaton - the Mon kingdom at the time, brought back to Burma Mon monks and scribes, who were practically the original creators of the Burmese script (Klein, 1983, p. 42). Since the main purpose of writing in the old days was to record religious texts, earlier texts were written in Pali - the language of Theravada Buddhism - which is related to Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages, but now extinct except for use in religious texts. Syntax and lexicon in Burmese have been heavily influenced by Pali (similar to the influence of Arabic, the language of Islam, on Persian or Turkish), and some Burmese lexical borrowings from Pali still keep the spelling of the Pali texts. In adapting Pali to Mon, and then ultimately to Burmese, earlier scholars of Burmese had to devise modifications: either adding characters to represent sounds that were absent in Pali but needed for Burmese, or keeping the extra characters that are not needed for writing Burmese (Min Latt, 1966).

Even though the majority of Burmese vocabulary is of Tibeto-Burman stock, a

large percentage of learnt and educated words associated with religion (Buddhism), philosophy, government and arts are derived from the ancient Indian language, Pali. In the Burmese Dictionary *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission, 1978), it is written that the Pali style of writing has had immense influence on Burmese literature. This is evident in the way the pure Burmese words are written by doubling the consonants as in the Pali language (Judson, 1951). Take for example the writing style of a two-tiered structure of the following words from *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission, 1978): *pu ṬṬ* (paper) (Vol.1, p.212), *rdw ṬṬ* (xerox)(Vol.3, p.169), *ow ṬṬm*: (duty)(Vol.4, p.164), and *vdṛ ṬṬ* (obedient)(Vol.4, p.124). The first word *pu ṬṬ*, which means ‘paper’ in Burmese can be written as *puṭṭ* but instead of writing the word this way, the Burmese chose the Pali way of subjoining the consonant and in doing so doubled the consonant ‘u’, hence we get the letter *pu ṬṬ* /σ—√/κυ/. The Burmese script preserves the means for reproducing the original spelling of Pali words and therefore forms a specialized tier in the lexicon of Burmese. Wheatley (2003) has also supported this by saying that Pali loans have given the Burmese lexicon a two-tiered structure (p. 196).

1.7.3 Influence of Hindi and Urdu on the Burmese Language

The Indians had been particularly influential on Burmese culture and Burmese society, especially after 1st January 1886, when Burma ceased to exist as an

independent kingdom. The Burmese king and queen were forced to leave the country and Burma was annexed as a province of British India (Klein, 1983). During the annexation period, under the British, the exodus of Indians into Burma was so large that they dominated almost all the jobs in the country, from security guards to labourers, entrepreneurs, doctors, civil servants, money lenders, and even farmers. Most of them married Burmese women which in turn resulted in the birth of a new generation called the Burmese Indians. British Rangoon was particularly populated by Indians and in 1930, the population of Indians in Rangoon alone was 53% (Butkaew, 2005, p. 2). Speaking Hindi and Urdu became very common not only among the Indians but also among educated Burmese and Burmese entrepreneurs who had daily contacts with Hindi speaking labourers and this resulted in the transfer of many Hindi words into the Burmese language. Many Burmese dishes and types of bread came as a result of Indian influence, prominently reflected in the Burmese version of Indian biryani 'efayguʃ/δ—v/π□√/ and naan eʃikʃʃym; /v.:v/β□.:/ (Butkaew, 2005). Words from the Burmese dictionary *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission, 1978) that are associated with food or cooking are: *masala* (spices), *faluda* (sundae), *samosa* (curry puff), *palata* (pancakes, from Hindi *prathas*), *papara* (crackers), *pudina* (mint leaves), *a-loo* (potatoes), *gawbi* (cabbage), *gonni* (gunny). Words for describing a person or employment such as *coolie* (labourers), *darwan* (watchmen), *marli* (gardener), *dobi* (launders), *babu* (a name to address an Indian man), *yaza* (king, from Hindi *Raja*), *Yama* (*Ram*, Hindu God), *Hannuman* (the monkey god) etc can be found in daily usage and scripts. In addition, the word *loun-chi*, the

traditional garment of Burmese people, consisting of a long strip of cloth tucked around the waist, is thought to have originated in India and it has become so well established in the Burmese language that many think that it is a compound of *loun* 'to be covered' and *chi* 'to tie up'.

Long after Burma declared independence from Great Britain, during General Ne Win's ascent to dictatorship in the early 1960s, his persistent expulsion of 'resident aliens' (immigrant groups were not recognized as citizens of the Union of Burma) led to an exodus of Indians back to India (Butkaew, 2005). Even though the population of Indians has dropped drastically to an estimated 5%, the words borrowed from Hindi are still widely used and they have assimilated into the Burmese language so well that the Burmese do not realize that they are words borrowed from Hindi.

1.7.4 Influence of Chinese on the Burmese Language

Burma has a very long boundary with China, approximately 1500 miles, in the north and north-eastern part. Because of easy accessibility, trade and migration of people from China were inevitable. The invasion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century (Klein, 1983), the appearance of the Chinese army in the seventeenth century (Tinker, 1967) and the migration of the Chinese in the 1700s and 1800s, resulted in the entry of Chinese culture, arts and language into

Burma. The Chinese infiltration into Burma became even more significant after the Second World War. Chinese schools were established in major towns and many Chinese became entrepreneurs in the highly lucrative rice and gem industries. Chinatowns and Chinese restaurants mushroomed everywhere.

Chinese influence on the economy and social life of the Burmese people is quite evident but in terms of language, the Chinese language has not influenced the Burmese language in the same manner as Pali and English. However, a few Chinese words can be found in the dictionaries *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission 1978, 2006). For example, *yifaygif* /π□v/π□←/ (ping pong game) (Vol.3, p.30), *aygufpD* /π□√/σ□/ (dumplings) (Vol.3, p.27), *jrD; aγD* /ημ□/♣□/ (rice noodles) (Vol.3, p.188), *jrfpGrf* /μφυ/συ.:v/ (thin noodles) (Vol.3, p.188), *wDauGFf* /τ□/κφ.:∩/ (sweet cake) (Vol.2, p.91), *vefcsm;* /λ—v/τ♣□/ (man drawn two wheeler) (Vol.4, p.116), *rmausmuf* /μ□/δ|↘/ (mahjong) (Vol.3, p.87), *wdkifzGef;* /τ□□/π|o←v/ (typhoon) (Vol.2, p.117), *jumndkFf* /κ♣□/νφ←/ (thick soy sauce) (Vol.1, p.53), *uGmpd* /κω□/σ□∩/ (Vol.1, p.70) etc.

The most obvious development in the relationship between the Chinese and Burmese nations reflected in terms of language is the publication of Burmese-Chinese dictionary called *jrefrmwγkuftbd}nef Myanmar-tarut Abidan* (Burmese-

Chinese Dictionary) in 1990, by Burmese Teaching and Research Section, Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, Beijing University. It has 60,000 entries and is probably the largest of all Burmese-foreign language dictionaries.

1.7.5 Influence of Japanese on the Burmese Language

During World War II, Japan occupied Burma not just one time but many times and the longest occupation was from 1942 until 1945. Within these three years, Japanese influence on the Burmese people could be seen in various aspects of life, in conversation, in education etc. People could converse quite well in Japanese. Children could read and write Japanese because the language was taught as a second language in schools (Tinker, 1967). During that era, Japanese took centre stage and knowing the Japanese language was an advantage for Burmese people. However, the Japanese language did not survive like English. After the retreat of the Japanese army, their culture and language popularity also diminished. People became more concerned with English and its culture.

Even though, the Japanese left Burma soon after their defeat, they eventually came back for visits. They visited their ancestors' graveyards, paid homage to shrines and some came back just to renew their memories (Visitors' Guide). Nowadays they come as tourists and they form the largest tourist group to visit Burma.

Japanese influence can be felt mostly in the sports domain. Burma has training places for Japanese martial arts, namely 'Judo', 'karate', 'jijitsu' and others. These words can be traced in the dictionary *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission, 1978). Japanese action films are also a hit with youngsters and the Japanese film , 'The Burmese Harp' (1956), which was directed by director Kon Ichikawa and nominated for the 1957 Academy Award for best foreign film, has gained international recognition (Takayama, 1966). Apart from that, Japanese food like 'sushi' and 'noodles' are gaining popularity. At one time, kimono floral designed clothing materials became very popular among the Burmese ladies. In Burmese dictionaries, words like *၎းယုးဖုးဖုးယုးယုး* /နုး.παυ/ကုး/π—/တုး/ (Japanese army police) (Vol.1, p.22) and *၎းယုးယုးယုး* /βυ/နုး/δ.←/ (bushido) (Vol.4, p.119) can be found (Commission, 1978).

1.7.6 Influence of Malay on the Burmese Language

In terms of language, the influence of Malay words on the Burmese language is quite minimal compared to other languages. In the dictionary, *Myanmar Abidan* (Commission, 1978), some words which originated from the Malaya Peninsula can be traced. Since this dictionary reveals the source of the words, it indicates *ယဝေဒီ*: /π.:/♣v/ (Malay in Burmese) in brackets if the source word is from Malaya. The words of Malay origin found in the dictionary are: *ခင်္ကျာ်ဂိၤ* /γ.:←/δ□←/ (godown) (Vol.1, p.148), *ယေၤဖိး*/π.:/γ□v/ (from Malay word *pingan* meaning plate) (Vol.3, p.40), *ယဂၤဝၤသိၤ*/π□/τ□v/ (batik) (Vol.3, p.10), *'ဒီးဂိၤ*: /δ←-/φ□v/ (durian) (Vol.2, p.174), etc (Commission, 1978).

The influence of Malay words in Burmese can be traced to the pre and post war periods. During the Second World War, it is said that many Malayan prisoners were brought into the southern part of Burma to build the bridge over the River Kwai. Many of the prisoners died there and those who survived, settled down in Southern Burma and raised families. In some cases, Malay men came into Burma to work in tin mines in the Tenasserim division in Southern Burma, got married and then migrated back to Malaysia with their families. A few cases like this can be traced in the Penang area where there is a Burmese community whose people migrated to Malaysia a long time ago (Ritchie & Toolseram, 2002, p.1). The earliest settlers were fishermen who came by fishing boats and established a colony – probably at Telok Ava, (Ritchie & Toolseram, 2002, p.1). Now that many Burmese people have migrated to Malaysia in search of greener pastures, it can be expected that in future a lot of Malay mixing will take place in

the Burmese language within the Burmese community in Malaysia. Already code-switching between the two languages is quite common among the Burmese people living in Malaysia.

1.8 Conclusion

In a period when Myanmar is facing political changes and policies, moving from a closed-door policy to that of building international relations; from a generally educated society to one that is advanced scientifically and technologically; from an agricultural based economy to that of a knowledge based economy, it is necessary for the language to expand and adapt itself to meet these contemporary needs through the adoption of new words. This is to enable it to function successfully not only in domains of science and technology but also in other fields of sports, economics, law, arts, businesses and humanities.