

A Comparative Study of Abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese

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Abstract. With the rapid development of politics, science, technology, economy, and culture, people generally seek more economical and concise language expressions, and concise and bright abbreviations that cover all aspects are produced. There are many abbreviations in modern Burmese and Chinese vocabulary systems, but there has been no comparative research on them. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and compare the word formation and pronunciation characteristics of abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese, and then to derive the abbreviation law. On the one hand, it can improve the comparative research findings of Burmese and Chinese researchers. Language, on the other hand, is inextricably linked to social life. With increasing economic and cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar, strengthening comparative language studies promotes scholars' understanding of Myanmar's politics, economy, and culture, and has some practical implications for the friendly development of China-Myanmar relations.

Keywords: Burmese Chinese, Burmese language. Chinese.

1. Introduction

Lexical abbreviation is a very natural language phenomenon that appears gradually in the use and development of modern language, and it is also a method of forming new words. In Burmese and Chinese, there are numerous abbreviations. We can deepen our understanding of the history and meaning of words through comparative study, as well as improve our efficiency in learning and practical application.

There has been little research on Burmese abbreviations both at home and abroad; only a few papers and books have some new words and abbreviations in Burmese, and there is no monograph on the subject. Burmese neologisms, the collation of Burmese abbreviations, the classification of Burmese abbreviations, word-building methods, reading and writing characteristics, and the characteristics of abbreviations in Myanmar news newspapers are currently the focus of existing research on Burmese abbreviations in Burmese academic circles. These studies primarily introduce the origins of the vocabulary, word-building methods, and the creators of Burmese neologisms and abbreviations.

At the moment, research on Chinese abbreviations is primarily focused on two areas: lexicology and cognition. Most scholars, both at home and abroad, have conducted extensive lexicological research on Chinese abbreviations. Including abbreviation names, definitions, and classifications, abbreviation word formation and construction, abbreviation lexical properties, abbreviation structural relations, and abbreviation usage norms. This type of research thoroughly explains all types of abbreviation characteristics based on linguistic theories and summarizes clear usage norms. Furthermore, some scholars have studied abbreviations from a cognitive perspective, which primarily analyzes the subjective reasons for the formation and composition of abbreviations on the basis of cognitive linguistics, guides abbreviation analysis, and standardizes abbreviation use. According to statistics, the most recent Modern Chinese Abbreviations Dictionary contains over 8,000 modern Chinese abbreviations. The seventh edition of Modern Chinese Dictionary contains a large number of lexicalized abbreviations.

Furthermore, there are many comparative studies on abbreviations of Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese at home and abroad, but they belong to the category of Asian and African languages, so this topic is of research value. This article will conduct a comparative study of the word-

formation and abbreviation characteristics of abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese, with the goal of educating readers and scholars about the similarities and differences.

2. Definition and Characteristics of Abbreviations

2.1 Definition of abbreviations

In domestic academic circles, the definition of abbreviations is not clear enough, and scholars have different definitions based on different research purposes and needs. In general, they are divided into two types: broad abbreviations and narrow abbreviations. Abbreviation, in broad terms, refers to the abbreviation or collective name of more complex words. This definition contains numerous abbreviations, and there is no unified conclusion on the classification of many words. According to narrow abbreviation, new phrases must be intercepted from the original form, and the final form has actual fixed expressive meaning in the language flow.

There are numerous types of abbreviations in the broad sense, which makes comparative language study difficult. As a result, this paper will use the narrow definition of abbreviations as the standard for data collection and analysis.

2.2 Characteristics of abbreviations

The original form is closely related to abbreviations under the narrow definition, and the new forms of words and phrases obtained after abbreviation have the following characteristics.

The new abbreviation means the same thing as the original. If the new word's meaning has changed or cannot represent the original word's meaning, it cannot become the original abbreviation.

The semantic structure of the new abbreviation and the original abbreviation may differ. Because human subjective cognition influences the generation and use of abbreviations, the original structure can be destroyed and reorganized in the process of intercepting the original form.

There are no elements in the abbreviation new style that do not exist in the original style. For example, "five in place" means "thinking, learning, publicity, work, and responsibility are in place," but because the original phrase lacks the morphemes "five" and "one," "five in place" cannot be considered an abbreviation.

This style of writing inspired the new abbreviation. Chinese abbreviations, for example, should be new phrases based on the original forms composed of Chinese characters. As a result, alphabetic words like "u1s1" and "srds" should not be considered abbreviations of Chinese characters. It should be a new type for the Burmese language, consisting of a single consonant letter or morpheme, syllable, and phrase based on consonants and vowels.

Abbreviations appear after the full form. Although the new abbreviation should, in theory, be more concise than the original, the original word cannot be called the abbreviation of the new word for explanation and expansion. For example, the word "wife" first appeared in Oracle Bone Inscriptions, followed by variants like "loving wife," "wife," and "good wife." However, because "妻" appeared before such derivatives, it should not be considered an abbreviation.

3. Abbreviation word formation

3.1 Word formation of Burmese abbreviations

Word-formation of local vocabulary abbreviations in Burmese

Generally speaking, there are three word-formation ways of local vocabulary abbreviations in Burmese, namely, acronym, syllable abbreviation and morpheme abbreviation.

Acronym

Abbreviation refers to the use of consonants of the main morpheme syllables of the original word or phrase to form abbreviations to express the meaning of the original word or phrase. For

example,မလတ is an abbreviation ofအမြောက်လုံခြံရေးတပ်, အမြောက်လုံခြံရေးတပ် (Artillery Security Forces) A is composed of three words, အမြောက် (Cannon, the main consonant letter isမ), လုံခြံရေး (Safe, the main consonant letter isလ) , တပ် (Army, the main consonant letter is Aတ) .

This is an abbreviation of the consonant letter of the main grapheme taken from each word.

Table 1 Examples of word formation of acronyms in Burmese

Primitive form	Abbreviation	Chinese interpretation
ကျေးရွာမြေယာကောမတီ	ကယက	农村土地委员会
စစ်ဘက်ကုန်စည်ဖြန့်ချိရေးဌာန	စကဖ	军人服务社
အထူးစုံစမ်းစစ်ဆေးရေးဦးစီးဌာန	စသုံးလုံး	侦探局
ဆက်သွယ်ရေးနှင့် ကြေးနန်းဌာန	ဆကရ	通信与电报部
ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်ကျောင်းသားသမဂ္ဂ	တကသ	仰光大学学生联合会
နိုင်ငံတော် ငြိမ်ဝပ်ပိပြားမှု တည်ဆောက်ရေးအဖွဲ့	နဝတ	国家治安委员会
ပြည်သူ့ဘဏ်	ပဘ	人民银行
အထက်တန်းကျောင်း	အထက	高级中学

3.2 Syllable abbreviation

Syllable abbreviation refers to the use of syllables of the main morphemes of the original word or phrase to form abbreviations to express the meaning of the original word or phrase. 例如：ပြည်ခိုင်ဖြိုး is a diminutive of ပြည်ထောင်စု ကြံ့ခိုင်ရေးနှင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအသင်း. ပြည်ထောင်စု ကြံ့ခိုင်ရေးနှင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအသင်း (Federal Commission for Consolidation and Development) is composed of the words, ပြည်ထောင်စု (Federal, the main grapheme syllable is ပြည်) , ကြံ့ခိုင်ရေး (Solid, consolidated, with the main grapheme syllables being A ခိုင်) , ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအသင်း (Development Committee, the main grapheme syllables are Aဖြိုး) . Therefore, ပြည်ခိုင်ဖြိုး was abbreviated by selecting the syllables of the main lexemes from the three words.

Table 2 Examples of word formation of syllable abbreviations in Burmese

Primitive form	abbreviation	Chinese interpretation
ပါမောက္ခချုပ်	ပါချုပ်	大学校长
တယ်သူ၏ကံကို စမ်းသည်မဲ	ကံစမ်းမဲ	抽奖券
သတင်းစာ၊ ဂျာနယ်၊ မဂ္ဂဇင်း	စာနယ်ဇင်း	报刊杂志

3.3 Morpheme abbreviation

Abbreviation refers to the use of the main morphemes or some morphemes of the original word or phrase to form abbreviations to express the meaning of the original word or phrase. For example,

ကုန်စည်ပြပွဲ is a diminutive of ကုန်ပစ္စည်းများကို မိတ်ဆက်ပြသပွဲ. ကုန်ပစ္စည်းများကို မိတ်ဆက်ပြသပွဲ (Commodity Exhibition) is composed of the words, ကုန်ပစ္စည်းများ (Commodities) , မိတ်ဆက် (Introduction) , ပြသပွဲ (Exhibition) . In this case, the main lexemes ကုန်စည် (Commodities) and ပြပွဲ (Exhibition) are used to synthesize the acronym ကုန်စည်ပြပွဲ.

Table 3 Examples of word formation of morpheme abbreviations in Burmese

Primitive form	abbreviation	Chinese interpretation
ရန်ကုန်အဝေးသင်တက္ကသိုလ်	အဝေးသင်	仰光远程大学
ရန်ကုန်အရှေ့ပိုင်းတက္ကသိုလ်	အရှေ့ပိုင်း	仰光东方大学
၈၈ မျိုးဆက်ကျောင်းသားများ	၈၈ မျိုးဆက်	88年代学生

4. Word formation of English vocabulary abbreviations in Burmese

Due to the openness of the vocabulary system, new English loanwords and abbreviations are also absorbed by Burmese. For English abbreviations, Burmese also has corresponding expressions. Therefore, in addition to the above-mentioned three abbreviations of local words, there are also word-building ways of English abbreviations in Burmese. The main acronym and the core acronym can also be regarded as direct transliteration.

4.1 Acronym

Abbreviations formed by this kind of word-formation usually consist of the first letter of each word in a phrase (the first letter of a function word is omitted), and then phonetic transcription is carried out in Burmese. For example, ဘီအေ/bi ei/ is the abbreviation of English word BA, and BA is the abbreviation of Bachelor of Arts.

Table 4 Examples of word formation of English acronyms in Burmese

English original form	English abbreviations	abbreviation
East India Company	EIC	အီအိုင်စီ
International Business Centre	IBC	အိုင်ပီစီ
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	AIDS	အေအိုင်ဒီအက်စီ
Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI	အက်ဖ်ဘီအိုင်

4.2 Core acronym

This kind of word-formation usually combines the initials with affixes and stems and core words in phrases to form abbreviations, which are then transcribed in Burmese phonetic notation. For example, /ne 'hsa/ is the abbreviation of the English word NASA, and NASA is the abbreviation of national aeronautics and space administration.

Table 5 Examples of word-building methods of key abbreviations of English vocabulary in Burmese

English original form	English abbreviations	abbreviation
Identification Card	ID card	အိုင်ဒီကတ်
Electronic Book	E-book	အီးဘုတ်
Electronic Mail	E-mail	အီးမိလ်

4.3 Word formation of Chinese abbreviations

Word formation of abbreviations in Chinese native vocabulary

Generally speaking, there are three word-formation ways of Chinese native vocabulary abbreviations, namely, condensed abbreviations, spelling abbreviations and abbreviated abbreviations.

Condensation abbreviation

Condensed abbreviations are the main body of Chinese abbreviations, which are recombined by intercepting the representative morphemes in the original words. For example, "高校" is the abbreviation of "高等院校" and "科技" is the abbreviation of "科学技术".

Table 6 Examples of word formation of condensed abbreviations in Chinese

Primitive form	Abbreviation
预防潮汛	防汛
简单介绍	简介
扫除文盲	扫盲
人民警察	民警
环境保护	环保

Spelling abbreviation

This kind of word-formation is usually composed by selecting representative morphemes from several different sets of words which are temporarily pieced together and loosely structured, and some of them are even directly truncated, which is the same as the word-formation of English spelling words. Therefore, this kind of words can also be called spelling abbreviations. For example, "高大上" is an abbreviation of "高端、大气、上档次".

Table 7 Examples of word-building methods of spelling abbreviations in Chinese

Primitive form	abbreviation
青海和西藏	青藏
泰山和北斗	泰斗
香港和澳门	港澳
动画和漫画	动漫
教育和科学和文化	教科文

Abbreviation

Compared with condensed abbreviations and patched abbreviations, abbreviated abbreviations are used. Abbreviated abbreviation refers to an abbreviation that directly cuts off the head or tail of the

original abbreviation, without any need to combine it. "Omit ending" means cutting off the tail of the original abbreviation, for example, "商务" is the abbreviation of "商务印书馆"; "Section head" means cutting off the original head. For example, "特区" is an abbreviation of "经济特区".

Table 8 Examples of word formation of abbreviated forms in Chinese

Abridged way		
Omit ending:	Primitive form	abbreviation
	复旦大学	复旦
	王府井大街	王府井
Section head:	Primitive form	abbreviation
	农村人民公社	公社
	中国人民解放军	解放军
	在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话	讲话

5. Word formation of Chinese and English vocabulary abbreviations

Similar to the Burmese language's absorption of English abbreviations, the increasingly frequent communication between China and foreign countries and the popularization of English education have caused a large number of English abbreviations to flood into the Chinese language. The word formation of English abbreviations in Chinese is transliteration.

Chinese transliteration abbreviations refer to those loanwords that are translated into Chinese according to English pronunciation. For example, "巴士" is an abbreviation of the English word bus, and BUS is an abbreviation of omnibus.

Table 9 Examples of word formation of English transliteration abbreviations in Chinese

English original form	English abbreviations	abbreviation
radio detection and ranging	RADER	雷达
acquired immune deficiency syndrome	AIDS	艾滋
Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation	LASER	镭射

5.1 Pronunciation characteristics of abbreviations

Pronunciation characteristics of Burmese abbreviations

Consonant letters are no longer lightly pronounced.

Burmese has the phenomenon of phonetic change. When the first syllable of a polysyllabic word is a syllable and has no independent meaning, it is generally lightly read. When lightly read, the vowel is weakened from the low vowel /a/ to the central vowel/. Such as:

Table 10 Examples of phonetic changes of consonants in Burmese

word	Theoretical phonetic symbol	Actual phonetic symbol
အပေ	/a' phei/	/a- phei/
အကျင့်ချုပ်	/a' kyin: gyout/	/a- kyin: gyout/

Since the first consonant/a'/is a zero consonant, there is no vowel to spell with it, so it needs to be read lightly as အ/a'/. The consonants in the form of acronyms will no longer be lightly read. For example:

Table 11 Examples of consonants of abbreviations in Burmese are not easily read.

Primitive form	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	abbreviation	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
အထက်တန်းကျောင်း	/a- htet tan: kyaun:/	အထက	/a' hta' ka'/

At this time, you don't need to pronounce အ/a'/ lightly, but pronounce the original pronunciation/a'/.

Clear consonants are no longer turbid.

According to the phonological phenomenon, the letters from the first line to the fifth line of the Burmese alphabet are arranged in unvoiced unvoiced sound, unvoiced unvoiced sound, voiced sound and nasal sound. The law of voiced consonants is that the unvoiced sounds in the first and second columns change to voiced sounds in the third and fourth columns.

Table 12 Corresponding table of voiced consonants in Burmese

voiceless consonant	voiced consonant	voiceless consonant	voiced consonant
က ခ	ဂ	စ ဆ	ဇ
တ ထ	ဒ	ပ ဖ	ဗ

For example, according to the law of voiced clear consonants, the second syllable/thaun/needs to be voiced into /daun/ and the third syllable/su'/needs to be voiced into/zu'/, that is, the pronunciation of /tha'/ should be changed into /da'/, and the pronunciation of /sa'/ should be changed into /za'/.

Table 13 Examples of unvoiced consonants of abbreviations in Burmese

Primitive form	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	abbreviation	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
ပြည်ထောင်စုပါတီ	/pyi daun zu' pa ti /	ပထစ	/pa'tha'sa'/

However, in the abbreviated form of the letter, which is abbreviated toပထစ, it does not need to be clouded, but is pronounced in its original form /pa'tha'sa'/.

Pronunciation of syllable and morpheme abbreviations

The abbreviated word-building methods of syllables and morphemes are all new forms of extracting complete syllables or morphemes from the original words or phrases, so they can be spelled directly according to the original syllables and morphemes.

Table 14 Examples of syllables, morphemes and pronunciations in Burmese

Primitive form	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	abbreviation	International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
စစ်သုံးစရိတ်	/sit thon: z-yeit/	စစ်စရိတ်	/sit z-yeit/
ငွေရင်းငွေနှီး	/ngwei yin: ngwei hni:/	ငွေရင်း	/ ngwei yin:/
ကျင့်ယောင်းလမ်းစဉ်	/kyin' haun: lan: zin/	ကျင့်စဉ်	/ kyin' zin /

5.2 Pronunciation Characteristics of Chinese Abbreviations

Chinese abbreviations have no pronunciation changes before and after abbreviation. The word formation of Chinese abbreviations is in reverse order, that is, it is decomposed from the superior language unit down into the original words that exist independently, and then meaningfully combined again. As Chinese characters are ideographic characters, which are a writing system that records

information with symbolic writing symbols, the basic unit of Chinese abbreviations is also Chinese characters, which are consistent with the abbreviated Chinese characters in spelling and writing.

5.3 Comparison of word formation and pronunciation of abbreviations

Abbreviation word formation.

6. similarity

6.1 Word formation of local abbreviations

There are three abbreviations in Burmese: acronym, syllable abbreviation and morpheme abbreviation, and three abbreviations in Chinese: condensed abbreviation, spelling abbreviation and abbreviated abbreviation. Because the two languages are quite different in expression, it is impossible to make a one-to-one comparison. However, through combing, it can be found that there are similarities between the two abbreviations. Except for the abbreviation in Burmese, other syllables, morphemes and three abbreviations in Chinese can find similarities. For example:

Table 15 Comparison of word-formation of condensed abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese

Burmese primitive form	Burmese abbreviations
ဝေဆာစည်ကား	ဝေစည်
Chinese primitive form	Chinese abbreviations
科学技术	科技

The abbreviation of "ဝေဆာစည်ကား" (lush and rich) is "ဝေစည်", The abbreviation of "科学技术" is "科技", both of which are made by regrouping the representative morphemes of the original words. It can be said that this kind of lexical abbreviation is similar to the contraction abbreviation in Chinese. Another example is:

Table 16 Comparison of shortened word-formation between Burmese and Chinese.

Burmese primitive form	Burmese abbreviations
၈၈ မျိုးဆက်ကျောင်းသားများ	၈၈ မျိုးဆက်
Chinese primitive form	Chinese abbreviations
复旦大学	复旦

The word "၈၈ မျိုးဆက်ကျောင်းသားများ" (students in the 88s) omits the part "ကျောင်းသားများ" (students), which is also very similar to the word "复旦大学" which omits the part "大学", and can be understood as the "omitted end" type of abbreviation in Chinese abridged abbreviation.

Table 17 Comparison of Word-formation Methods of Spelling Abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese

Burmese primitive form	Burmese abbreviations
ပါမောက္ခချုပ်	ပါချုပ်
Chinese primitive form	Chinese abbreviations
流通货币	通货

In the word formation of syllable abbreviation, the abbreviation of "ပါမောက္ခချုပ်" "(principal)" is similar to that of "流通货币". Selecting representative morphemes from several different free sets of words with loose structure in the original form to combine them can be understood as the spelling abbreviation in Chinese.

6.2 Word formation of English abbreviations

There are a large number of English loanwords in Burmese and Chinese. Through comparative analysis, it can be found that both of them have word-building ways of direct transliteration of English abbreviations.

Table 18 Comparison of English word abbreviations in Burmese and Chinese

English original form	English abbreviations	abbreviation
Electronic Book	E-book	အီးဘုခ်
radio detection and ranging	RADER	雷达

7. Differentia

7.1 Morpheme extraction unit

Because the Burmese language is phonography, it has consonants and vowels, so when extracting morphemes, syllables can be used as the extraction unit, as can a complete word or word. Chinese is an ideographic character that is expressed as morphemes by Chinese characters. As a result, only Chinese characters can be used as the unit when extracting morphemes.

7.2 Representative morpheme category

In Burmese, each syllable is centered on consonant letters, which are joined with consonant symbols or vowel symbols to form syllables. As a result, consonant letters are especially important in Burmese. Basic Burmese (1)[M] [Zhong Zhixiang, Yin Xiangling. World Book Publishing Guangdong Co., Ltd., Guangzhou, 2012:2.] As a result, consonants in key syllables are frequently chosen as the basis for new words in acronyms and morphemes. The Chinese abbreviation corpus, on the other hand, reveals that most abbreviations are nominal abbreviations and verb abbreviations, implying that the new ones are mostly nouns and verbs with practical significance, which are the original head words rather than the modified ones.

7.3 Word formation of English abbreviations

As both Burmese and English are phonography, they can combine syllables through the combination of consonants and vowels. Therefore, there are a large number of English loanwords in Burmese, whose expressions are Burmese letters, and their pronunciations are similar to those of

English words, which also conform to the definition of abbreviations. However, Chinese is an ideographic character, and Pinyin is only a process of spelling syllables, which plays an auxiliary role in recognizing the pronunciation of Chinese characters. It can't accurately express Chinese characters and meanings, so it can't communicate with English. English concepts in Chinese are mostly Chinese words translated according to their actual meanings, so there are no abbreviations directly related to English words in Chinese.

7.4 Abbreviation pronunciation

similarity

Except for the acronym, syllable and morpheme abbreviation in Burmese is a new type of word formation by extracting complete syllables or morphemes from the original words or phrases, so the pronunciation is the same as that of syllables or morphemes in the original form, and no phonetic change occurs. The three types of abbreviations in Chinese all use meaningful reorganization by extracting morphemes from the original form. Because the extracted morphemes are the inherent Chinese characters in their original form, the spelling remains consistent with the inherent Chinese characters in their original form.

differentia

There will be pronunciation changes in the spelling of common words due to phonetic variation in Burmese. However, the new abbreviation does not follow the phonetic variation law in acronym word formation, and the pronunciation will change correspondingly when compared to the original, that is, consonant letters are no longer lightly read, and clear consonants are no longer turbid. Chinese abbreviations, on the other hand, are always consistent with the pronunciation of Chinese characters in their original form, and the pronunciation will not change.

tag

With the advancement of technology, abbreviations have become an essential part of the modern Burmese and Chinese vocabulary systems. Although Burmese and Chinese belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family and are isolated languages in language type, there are differences in word formation and abbreviation pronunciation. It also demonstrates that China and Myanmar have distinct language characteristics, as well as language development and change characteristics in different social contexts. As a result, in language learning, we should conduct a rational analysis of abbreviations, learn more about their cultural significance, and standardize their use.

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