A Study of the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’

in Myanmar Language

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present Myanmar usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ from the standpoint of Sociolinguistics. Myanmar Language derived from Tibeto-Chinese family of languages. Myanmar language is tone languages because high and low tones determine different meaning of words. Besides Myanmar Language has sayings, proverbs and metaphors like other languages. The usage of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ is the metaphor of Myanmar Language. It comes from the poem of ‘Ger Aye’. Ger Aye is the name of Myanmar girl. In this poem, the characters are Ger Aye, her mother, Mister Bachelor and the little monkey. Mother made the bun with paper sticking to it. And then, she offers a bun with the Lilly salver. The little monkey came running down and put and eat the bun. Mother did not see the little monkey. She thinks the bun was lost by Ger Aye. For this case, Ger Aye was beaten by her mother. She was crying in the darkness. Mister Bachelor pulled her leg, hanging down. At that time, it thundered in the south of sky. Again, Mother made the bun with paper sticking to it. And then, she offers a bun with the Lilly salver. The little monkey came running down and put and eat the bun. Mother did not see the little monkey. She thinks the bun was lost by Ger Aye. For this case, Ger Aye was beaten by her mother. She was crying in the darkness. Mister Bachelor pulled her leg, hanging down. At that time, it thundered in the south of sky. These actions are again and again. This poem shows Myanmar traditional Culture. The research questions are (1) What is the root of the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’? and (2) In which social situations it can be used? This problem will be solved by Qualitative Research Method from the aspect of Sociolinguistics.

Key words: Ger Aye, Myanmar Language, metaphor, sociolinguistics.
Introduction

Myanmar language derived from Tibeto-Chinese family of languages. Myanmar language is tone language because high and low tones determine different meaning of words. Besides Myanmar Language has sayings, proverbs and metaphors like other languages. The usage of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ is the metaphor of Myanmar Language.

Objectives

1. To know what is the root of the usage, ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ and in which social situation it can be used.
2. To apply for foreign students who are studying Myanmar Language

Hypothesis

Myanmar people use the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ in suitable social situation which likes circle.

1. Background of problem

Myanmar people use the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ in suitable social situations. It is a metaphor of Myanmar Language.

In that,

Metaphor is a word or phrase which is used for special effect, and which does not have its usual or literal meaning.¹

A metaphor that is extended throughout a poem or story, and may involve further related comparisons, is an extended metaphor.²

¹ Richard, 1992, 139.
² www. wiki. metaphor.com
So, the usage of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ is an extended metaphor of Myanmar Language.

This problem will be solved by Qualitative Research Method from the aspect of Sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistics is a branch of Linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between Language and Society.¹

In Linguistics terms and Concepts,

Sociolinguistics, or the study of Language in relation to society, is a relative newcomer to the linguistic fold. It was not until the early 1960s, largely as a result of William Labov’s work in America, and Peter Trudgill’s in Britain, that it developed into a recognized branch of Linguistics.²

Sociolinguistics is the descriptive study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society.

The social aspects of language were in the modern sense first studied by Indian and Japanese linguists in the 1930s, and also by Louis Gauchat in Switzerland in the early 1900s, but none received much attention in the West until much later. The first attested used of the term sociolinguistics was by Thomas Callan Hodson in the title of his 1939 article ‘Sociolinguistics in India’ published in Man in India.³

In 1952 the late Haver C. Currie published a paper, first drafted in 1949, entitled ‘Projection of sociolinguistics: the relationship of speech to social status’. It took sometimes for the term ‘sociolinguistics’ for which Currie claims priority, to take root, but by the early 1960s the first sociolinguistics conferences were being held anthologies of articles dealing with properties of

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¹ Crystal, 2003, 422.
² Finch, 2000, 193.
language calling for the inclusion of social factors in the analysis had started to appear.¹

According to this points, Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between Language and its society.

In sociolinguistics, it has language functions.

It has been pointed out that apart from conveying information from one person to another, language may be used to express emotions from one person to another, language may be used to express emotions and to direct the activities of other people.²

C- Criper and H.G. Widdowson distinguished seven factors of language functions. They are (1) referential function

(2) expressive or emotive function

(3) directive function

(4) phatic or contact function

(5) contextual function

(6) metalinguistics function

(7) poetic function.³

Thus, this paper will analyze the metaphor of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ aspects of Sociolinguistics.

2. Description of the root of the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’

The usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ comes from the Myanmar poem of ‘Ger Aye’. Ger aye is the name of Myanmar girl. This poem is as follow.

¹ www.blackwellreference.com
² Criper & Widdowson, 1975,195.
³ Criper & Widdowson, 1975,195-197.
‘Ger Aye’

Ger Aye, because her mother beat her

Was crying in the darkness

Mister Bachelor from a hole in the wall,

Pulled her leg,

Hanging down

Hanging down. Wait a bit.

It thundered in the south.

A bun

A bun with paper sticking to it.

Was put on the lily salver as an offering,

From above the shrine the little monkey

Came running down,

Ger Aye.

(Translated by J.A Stewart)¹

In Myanmar,

‘ကောင်းချင်’

ကောင်းချင်: ယူးင်ကန်ဖြေဆို

လျင်တွေမှာပါကြာ

ကျွန်းကျင်းပြ သေချာဖျင်

ကျွန်းစပါးလိုင်းဗာ

¹ Than Htut, 2002, 16.
This poem is an endless folk song. It starts with ‘Ger Aye’ (ကြယ္အို) and ends with ‘Ger Aye’ (ကြယ္အို) and starts with ‘Ger Aye’ and ends with ‘Ger Aye’ and so on. But it is never end and it likes circle. There are three paragraphs in this poem. The first stanza starts with ‘Ger Aye’. The first stanza end of syllable is ‘Hanging down’ (လောလျင်) and The second stanza starts with ‘Hanging down’ (လောလျင်). The second stanza ends with ‘A bun’ (တိုးခြင်္) and the third stanza starts with ‘A bun’ (တိုးခြင်္). The third stanza ends with ‘Ger Aye’ (ကြယ္အို) and the first stanza starts with ‘Ger Aye’ (ကြယ္အို). So, it is never end. It shows that is Myanmar verses linking rhythm. Besides, this poem shows Myanmar Culture. Most of Myanmar are Buddhists. So, they offer snack or rice and curry to the image of Buddha.

Ger Aye is the name of Myanmar girl. In this poem, the characters are Ger Aye, her mother, Mister Bachelor and the little monkey. Mother made the bun with paper sticking to it. And then, she offers a bun with the Lilly salver. The little monkey came running down and put and eat the bun. Mother did not see the little monkey. She thinks the bun was lost by Ger
Aye. For this case, Ger Aye was beaten by her mother. She was crying in the darkness. Mister Bachelor pulled her leg, hanging down. At that time, it thundered in the south of sky.

Again, Mother made the bun with paper sticking to it. And then, she offers a bun with the Lilly salver. The little monkey came running down and put and eat the bun. Mother did not see the little monkey. She thinks the bun was lost by Ger Aye. For this case, Ger Aye was beaten by her mother. She was crying in the darkness. Mister Bachelor pulled her leg, hanging down. At that time, it thundered in the south of sky. These actions are again and again. So, this case likes circle and endless.

This poem is taught by teachers to 1st standard students of primary school in Myanmar. The author is an anonymous. This poem appeared at the emerging of paper because of the sentence, ‘A bun with paper sticking to it’. So, it shows that it started about 18th century (Konebound Period).

3. Analysis of the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’

The usage of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ can be used in suitable social situations.

e.g 1. Aye Aye and her younger sister Hla Hla watch a Korean movie from MRTV at their house. The movie’s plot is complex and like circle.

Aye Aye : ‘This movie is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.’

‘ဗေဒါးပြေကြည့်မှုချဉ်းစီးရာစိုး uploading’

Hla Hla : ‘Right Ma Ma.’

‘ရှေးယံသည်’

In this social situation, Aye Aye and Hla Hla watch a korean movie at their house. The relationship of Aye Aye and Hla Hla are sisters. Aye Aye said, ‘This movie is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.’ She used this usage as a metaphor. This speech
event performs referential function, emotive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

e.g 2. At U Chit Teashop of Yangon University. Mg Mg is talking about the history of ancient city of Tagaung to Ko Ko. But his speech is not going to aim and complex of Tagaung King’s name.

Ko Ko: ‘Mg Mg, your speech is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.’

Mg Mg: Never mind. Next day I will tell you this history. Tonight I will read the history of ancient city of Tagaung.’

In this social situation, Ko Ko and Mg Mg are sitting at U Chit Teashop of Yangon University. The relationship of Ko Ko and Mg Mg are friends. Ko Ko said, ‘Mg Mg, your speech is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’. He used this usage as a metaphor. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, directive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

e.g 3. Ma Ma and Mya Mya work at trading company. They are accountants of their company. Today they did the account of last month income and outcome.

But it is not equal valance.

Mya Mya: ‘This case likes ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.‘
Ma Ma: ‘Yes. We will try it.’

In this social situation, Mya Mya and Ma Ma are accountants of trading company. The relationship of Mya Mya and Ma Ma are colleagues. Mya Mya said, ‘This case likes ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.’ She used this usage as the metaphor of Myanmar Language. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, directive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

**e.g 4.** U Aung is a managing director of Tourism Company.

His officers and he are meeting in Conference Room of his company. He is angry with his officers for bad reception to tourist.

U Aung- ‘Yesterday, one of our customers complained to me that is your bad reception to tourists.

Your behavior is being **Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother**.

I always say customers are always right.

So, we fulfilled our customer’s desires.’

‘ဗော်လား သူ ဆိုသည်တုံးတွေနားလည် တို့၏ လူသားကျွန်တော်မှာ အဖြစ် ဖျင်သွားသည်]

လူသားကျွန်တော်မှာ အဖြစ် ဖျင်သွားသည်၏။ ထို့အဖြစ် ဖျင်သွားသည်၏

သူအား ဖျင်သွားသည်၏ လူသားကျွန်တော်မှာ အဖြစ် ဖျင်သွားသည်၏’

Officers- Yes Sir.

‘ပြည်ဆောင်မှု’
In this social situation, U Aung and his officers are meeting in Conference Room of his company. U Aung said, ‘Your behavior is being Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’. He used this usage as a metaphor. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, directive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

**e.g 5.** U Soe and Daw Khin have one daughter and one son. Daughter’s name is Hnin Hnin and she is ten years old. Son’s name is Thiha and he is nine years old. U soe is a doctor. This morning, their father went to work and then they are quarrelling.

Thus, Daw Khin scolds them.

Daw Khin- ‘Hnin Hnin and Thiha, you are quarreling when your father went to work. you are being Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother.

Don’t quarrel. Don’t quarrel. I always say it.

But you don’t obey mother’s speech. Hnin Hnin, Be away from your younger brother. Thiha doesn’t play with Hnin Hnin.’

‘ချင်းစည်းပါ, သူငယ်ေးတို့။ အခြားအကြောင်းမသော် စိတ်လှုပ်ရာစက်သော်ကို။ အခြားအကြောင်းမသော် စိတ်လှုပ်ရာစက်သော်ကို။

မကြည့်ပါ။ သူငယ်ေးတို့။ မကြည့်ပါ။ စိတ်လှုပ်ရာစက်သော်ကို။

အတွက်အကြောင်းမသော် စိတ်လှုပ်ရာစက်သော်ကို။

ဦးချင်းစည်းပါ။

Hnin Hnin- ‘Yes Mom.’

‘ကြည့်ပါစိတ်လှုပ်ရာစက်သော်ကို။

Thiha - ‘Yes Mom.’
In this social situation, U Soe is Daw Khin’s husband and Hnin Hnin and Thiha are their daughter and son. Daw Khin said, ‘you are being Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother.’ She used this usage as a metaphor. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, directive function, contextual function, metalinguistics function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

**e.g. 6.** Daw Nwe Nwe and Daw Mu Mu are old friends. They are about 45 years old and they did not have contact with each other about twelve years. Today they met at City Mart in Yangon. They recognized each other and they were very happy. Then they went to Moon Bakery. They are drinking juice and talking about their life.

Daw Mu Mu - I’m single and what about you?

Daw Nwe Nwe - My husband is U Kyaw Kyaw whom you know.

Daw Mu Mu - Is he your first lover?

Daw Nwe Nwe - Yes. I had second, third, fourth lovers. Finally, I know that my really lover is Ko Ko Kyaw. He loves only me and his mind is never change. So, we married in 2005. We have two daughters.
Daw Mu Mu - Oh! I see. Finally, your love likes ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’.

‘ကြက် ကလေးမှူးနာယကဖောင်းပေး အစားမျိုးကြား အနေဖြင့် အရှုးမှာ အခြားအပြောက်ကြည့်ပေး’

Daw Nwe New- Really right my friend.

‘ကြက် ကလေးမှူးနာယကဖောင်းပေး’

In this social situation, Daw Nwe Nwe and Daw Mu Mu are old friends old and they didn’t have contact with each other about twelve years. They met at City Mart and they went Moon Bakery and talking about their life. Daw Mu Mu said, ‘Finally, your love likes ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’’. She used this usage as a metaphor. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

e.g 7. Ko Ko and Ko Toe are best friends. At Sunday, they met Teashop.

Ko Ko – Are you OK in your work?

‘အခြား朦朦သည်ဖောင်းအမှုရှင်’

Ko Toe – OK. But my boss is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ when he is speaking concerned with work.

‘ကြက်ကလေးမှူးနာယကဖောင်း အစားမျိုးကြား အနေဖြင့် အရှုးမှာ အခြားအပြောက်ကြည့်ပေး’

Ko Ko- So you are hard working.

‘ကြက်ကလေးမှူး အစားမျိုးကြား အနေဖြင့်အမှုရှင်’

Ko Toe – Of course.
In this social situation, Ko Ko and Ko Toe are best friends. They met at Teashop in their holiday. Ko Toe said, ‘But my boss is being ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ when he is speaking concerned with work.’ He used this usage as a metaphor. This speech event performs referential function, emotive function, contextual function and contact function of sociolinguistics.

In the above examples, the social situation of watching TV programme, talking about the history of ancient city Tagaung, working their work in company and in family, and two old friends and best friend talking, the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ can be used as a metaphor in their speech.

Therefore, the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ can be used the circle situation of every social case.

Average use of Language Functions in the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ of the above examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Language function</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The speech events of ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’</td>
<td>referential function</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>expressive or emotive function</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>directive function</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>phatic or contact function</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>contextual function</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>metalinguistics function</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to this table, the speech events of the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ performs 100% of referential function, emotive function, contact function, and contextual function. Besides it performs 66.67% of directive function and 16.67% of metalinguistics function. Therefore, Myanmar people use the usage ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ that performs mostly referential function, emotive function, contact function, and contextual function and occasionally directive function and metalinguistics function. It can be used between the same social class or upper social class to middle and lower social class.

**The same social class**

- upper social class → upper social class
- middle social class → middle social class
- lower social class → lower social class

**Upper social class to middle and lower social class.**

- upper social class → middle social class
- upper social class → lower social class
- middle social class → lower social class

**Conclusion**

This paper presented the study of the usage, ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ in Myanmar Language. The root of this usage comes from Myanmar endless folk song ‘Ger Aye’ and it started in 18th century (Konebaung Period).

As a result, the metaphor of the usage, ‘Ger Aye who is beaten by her mother’ is using in the circle situation of every social case in Myanmar.
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