



THE VARIATIONS OF ENGLISH ADJECTIVE PHRASE
USE AMONG BLOGGERS FROM TWO MYANMAR
ETHNIC GROUPS

BY

HNIN PWINT PHYU

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Human Sciences in Applied Linguistics

Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and
Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

MAY 2016

ABSTRACT

Blogs have become an undeniably important source of information in socio-political occurrences in Myanmar, especially concerning the conditions of its minorities including the Rohingyas. However, Myanmar bloggers are non-native speakers of English and their mother tongues belong to different language families of unique historical backgrounds. These differences may have significant effects on the English language production of the bloggers. This study specifically explores variations of adjective phrases used by Burmese and Rohingya bloggers. Adjectival modifiers are very important in the content of blogs as they are linguistically instrumental in the narrations, descriptions and analyses of incidents and issues. Adjective phrases collected from forty blog articles have been thoroughly analysed. The findings of this have theoretical and pedagogical implications. Among others, it can be concluded that adjective phrases with adverb modifiers is the form most frequently used by both Rohingya and Burmese bloggers. However, Burmese bloggers use more varieties of adverb modifiers than Rohingya bloggers. The latter, on the other hand, have been found to considerably use more complements with different prepositional phrases. In terms of functions, both Rohingya and Burmese bloggers used adjective phrases for functions to describe qualification and human propensity. However, while Rohingya bloggers used various adjective phrases to describe these functions, it has been found that Burmese bloggers used only complements for these purposes which could be the result of native language influence, as these functions are usually performed by verbs in the Burmese language.

خلاصة البحث

في الوقت الراهن أصبحت المدونات مصدرا مهما لا يمكن إنكاره للمعلومات والأحداث السياسية والاجتماعية في ميانمار، وخاصة فيما يتعلق بأخبار الأقليات بما في ذلك أهل روهينغيا، ومن المعروف أن المدونين الميانماريين ليسوا من الناطقين بالأصلين باللغة الإنجليزية، ولغاتهم الأم تنحدر من عدة أسرات لغوية مختلفة ذات خلفية تاريخية فريدة. قد يكون لتلك الاختلافات تأثيرات ذات أهمية على ما يقوم المدونون بتدوينه باللغة الإنجليزية. استكشفت هذه الدراسة على وجه التحديد التنوعات التي تتضمنها العبارات الوصفية التي استخدمها المدونون البرماويون ومدونو الروهينغيا، تعد التعديلات و التغييرات في العبارات الوصفية مهمة جدا في محتوى المدونات، كما أنها مفيدة جدا من الناحية اللغوية فيما يُروى، وعند استخدام التعبيرات الوصفية، وتحليل الأحداث والقضايا. تم تجميع عدة عبارات وصفية من أربعين مقالا من المدونات، ثم تم تحليلها تحليلا شاملا. نتائج ذلك التحليل لها تطبيقات نظرية وتربوية. وضمن أمور أخرى يمكن أن نخلص إلى أن الصيغة المستخدمة غالبا من قبل مدوني روهينغيا وبورما كليهما هي العبارات الوصفية مع بعض التعديلات أو التغيير في استعمال الظروف، إلا أن مدوني بورما يستخدمون تنوعات أكثر من مدوني روهينغيا عند استعمال الظروف والحال. ومن ناحية أخرى فإن مدوني روهينغيا يستخدمون بشكل أكثر مكملات الجمل مع مختلف أدوات ومواضع الجر. فيما يتعلق بمجال الوظائف اللغوية فإن كلا من مدوني بورما وروهينغيا قد استخدموا العبارات الوصفية لوصف الكفايات، والنزعات الإنسانية، غير أنه بينما استخدم مدونو روهينغيا مختلف عبارات الوصف لوصف تلك الصفات، فقد وجد أن مدوني بورما قد استخدموا مكملات الجمل فقط لهذه الأغراض، وقد يكون ذلك راجعا لتأثير اللغة الأصلية حيث إن هذه الأغراض اللغوية تتم عادة باستخدام الأفعال في لغة البورماويين.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Applied Linguistics.

.....
Maskanah Mohammad Lotfie
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Applied Linguistics.

.....
Haja Mohiddeen B.Mohamed Ali
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of English and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Applied Linguistics.

.....
Zahariah Pilus
Head, Department of English

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Applied Linguistics.

.....
Ibrahim M. Zein
Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic
Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Hnin Pwint Phyu

SignatureDate.....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**THE VARIATIONS OF ENGLISH ADJECTIVE PHRASE USE
AMONG BLOGGERS FROM TWO MYANMAR ETHNIC
GROUPS**

I declare that the copyright holders of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2015 Hnin Pwint Phyu and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Hnin Pwint Phyu

.....
Signature

.....
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Allah (SWT) for blessing me with the strength and knowledge to complete this study. It is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my dear parents and my supervisor, Dr Maskanah Mohammad Lotfie, who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal and their continuous support. I would like to thank my brother and sister for their encouragement.

Finally, a special thanks to Turkey Diynet Foundation for continuous support, encouragement and financial assistance to our Rohingya students, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration	v
Copyright page.....	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Definition of Terms	6
1.6.1 Adjective Phrases	6
1.6.2 Blogging and Blogger	7
1.6.3 Myanmar Ethnic Groups.....	7
1.6.4 Myanmar English.....	8
1.7 Organisation of Thesis.....	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 Blogs and Bloggers.....	10
2.3 Cross-Linguistic Influence.....	11
2.4 Burmese and Rohingya Languages	12
2.5 Adjectives and Adjective Phrases in Burmese and Rohingya Languages	13
2.6 Studies on Burmese and Rohingya Languages.....	16
2.7 Adjectives in English.....	18
2.7.1 Syntactic Aspect of Adjectives	20
2.7.2 Adjective Phrases in English.....	22
2.8 Forms and Functions	23
2.9 Studies on Adjectives	24
2.10 Theoretical Framework.....	27
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	29
3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Research Design	29
3.3 Sampling and Data Collection	29
3.4 Data Analysis.....	30
3.5 Pilot Study	33

CHAPTER FOUR: THE USE OF ADJECTIVE PHRASES BY ROHINGYA AND BURMESE BLOGGERS	35
4.1 Introduction.....	35
4.2 RQ 1: What are the Forms of Adjective Phrases Used by Rohingya and Burmese Bloggers?	35
4.1.1 Discussion of the Findings	38
4.3 RQ 2: What are the Similarities and Differences between Adjective Phrases Used by Rohingya and Burmese Bloggers?	41
4.3.1 Modifiers	41
4.3.2 Complements	44
4.4 RQ 3: What are the Functions of Adjective Phrases Used by Rohingya and Burmese Bloggers?	46
4.4.1 Discussion of the Findings	49
4.4.2 Core Semantic Functions	50
4.5 RQ 4: What are the Similarities and Differences between Adjective Phrases Used by Rohingya and Burmese Bloggers?	54
 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	 59
5.1 Introduction.....	59
5.2 Summary of the Findings	60
5.3 Theoretical Implications of the Study.....	62
5.4 Pedagogical Implications of the Study	63
5.5 Limitations of the Study	64
5.6 RecommendationS for Future Research	65
 REFERENCES.....	 67
 APPENDIX A ROHINGYA BLOGS	 71
APPENDIX B BURMESE BLOGS.....	72
APPENDIX C SAMPLE ARTICLES BY ROHINGYA BLOGGERS	73
APPENDIX D SAMPLE ARTICLES BY BURMESE BLOGGERS	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Comparison between adjectives of Burmese and Rohingya language	15
Table 3.1	Adjective phrases coding categories (adapted from Huddleston and Pullum, 2005)	31
Table 3.2	Functions of adjective phrases coding categories (Adapted from Dixon (2004))	32
Table 3.3	Summary of research procedure	34
Table 4.1	Frequencies of adjective phrases in Rohingya and Burmese blogs	35
Table 4.2	Types of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers	37
Table 4.3	Comparison between adverb modifiers of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers	42
Table 4.4	Determinative and prepositional phrase modifiers of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers	42
Table 4.5	Comparison between adjective phrase with prepositional phrase complements used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers	44
Table 4.6	Comparison between adjective phrases with subordinate clause complement used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers	45
Table 4.7	Functions of adjective phrases used by Myanmar bloggers	47
Table 4.8	Types of adjective phrases used by Myanmar bloggers according to their semantic functions	48
Table 4.9	Comparison of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers for qualification	55
Table 4.10	Comparison of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers for human propensity	57

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Relationship between forms and functions (From Pyne (2006)'s Exploring Language Structure)	23
Figure 2.2	Theoretical Framework of the study	28
Figure 4.1	Distribution of adjective phrases by Burmese and Rohingya bloggers	36

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Myanmar is a country in South East Asia. Because of its geographical location between India, China and the Indian Ocean, the country is exposed to different people of the world throughout history. As a result, ethnic groups as well as the languages of the country are intermixed with those of foreign countries. According to Buchanan (1977), the ethnic groups of Myanmar are influenced by the Chinese, Tartar, Persians, Arabs, Japanese, Malays and Indians not only in their appearances but also in their languages.

From a linguistic view point, languages spoken in Myanmar are affected by both Eastern and Western languages of Asia. For example, Rohingya, Maramagyi and Banga languages are believed to have Persian, Arabic, Hindi and English origins. On the other hand, Shan, Kachin, Kayin and Chin languages are influenced by Tartar and Chinese languages. It is important to note that the Burmese language has Hindi, Chinese and other Asian language influences (Buchanan, 1977).

English has been used in Myanmar since the British era (1885- 1948). During this time, English was the official language used in government offices and the medium of instruction for primary, secondary and higher education. After independence, the Burmese language became the official language but English is still used for secondary and higher education. Nevertheless, educated people of Myanmar use English, which is somewhat influenced by Indian English and native languages of Myanmar (Win, 2003).

It has become a current trend that people describe to the world what is happening in their communities, regions and countries via blogs. Similarly, blogs are important sources of information of events in Myanmar, such as conditions of minorities,

including Rohingya and Chin. Myanmar practices the so-called freedom of speech which allows newspapers, journals and magazines to share what they think about other religions, except Buddhism, as well as other sensitive things in an offensive way. However, oppression by the government and other human rights violations cannot be shared openly in local newspapers and other media. As a result, blogs are essential for gathering information on Myanmar (Magnuson, 2010). To accomplish this purpose, bloggers use English as a medium so that the message will get to as large an audience as possible. Crystal (2006) suggested that blogs have different functions such as sharing information about oneself and society. Texts such as those from newspapers and magazines are controlled by censorship and have gone through several editing processes. Language in blogs, however, is more natural, direct, casual and uncensored which reflects the language variety the locals use more efficiently. As those bloggers are not native speakers of English language, we may see variations in their language structure, which are influenced by their mother tongues. Thus, their variety of English will have its own characteristics and features which are interesting to study.

In this study, the usage of adjective phrases is the focus because modifiers play a significant role in the content of blogs which narrate, describe and analyse incidents and issues. There are several types of adjectival phrases categorized such as those with complements and modifiers, but as non-native speakers of English, some structures may be used more frequently than others depending on similarities to their native languages. In addition, functions for using these adjective phrases may also be different based on their purposes and ideas, which may also be influenced by their native language. On the other hand, there may be some categories which are used in different ways compared to Standard English. In this study, all these variations are analysed and discussed based on the usage by Myanmar bloggers.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Rohingya and Burmese language are different in terms of their historical origins and linguistic structures. Although both Rohingya and Burmese are languages spoken in Myanmar, Burmese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, is monosyllabic and has very different sentence and phonemic structures from English (Herber & Milner, 1989). Rohingya, on the other hand, belongs to the Indo-European family of languages and has more similarities with the languages of this group (Harvey, 1925). Consequently, the influence of these native languages is significant in the production of the English language of each ethnic group. Specifically on the use of adjectives, Rohingya language widely uses adjectives on both attributive and predicative positions, and also has a significant number of structures of adjective phrases with different modifiers and complements. However, in the Burmese language, adjective takes a more significant role in attributive position as other parts of speech are responsible for predicative functions. This investigation on the English language use of Myanmar bloggers is carried out because the language use of the bloggers may hinder the actual meaning that they aim to share due to direct translation and structural differences between L1 and L2. Moreover, the differences may hinder widespread dissemination of news on the plight of the ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Specifically, the purpose of Myanmar blogs is to describe situations and analyse why incidents happen, so adjective phrases carry important information in these analytical articles. In both Burmese and Rohingya languages, adjectives are mostly used for attributive properties, so this influences the Myanmar English produced by these two ethnic groups and as a result, redundancy of patterns is prominent in these blogs. Therefore, it is important to understand the range and frequency of adjective phrases

used in Myanmar blogs and a systematic analysis is required for the two language variations. On the other hand, functions of the language they use such as describing quality, quantity, human propensity or physical property may differ based on their mother tongue. Therefore, how these forms are used for various purposes in Myanmar English is an interesting area to explore. In Burmese language, most of the functions are carried out by nouns and verbs, while Rohingya language uses various adjectives for a particular function. Accordingly, there may be variations in the use of functions of adjective phrases by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers.

Finally, upon checking language research carried out in Myanmar, attention has been mostly paid on verbal and adverbial subcategorization and variation because of their syntactically multivalent nature. In addition, most studies on Myanmar English are based on phonological aspect and styles which are also very old studies indeed (Bradley, 1982; Khin Min; 1987). On the other hand, most of the Rohingya studies are carried out from a political point of view rather than linguistic point of view (Lewa, 2009; Smith, 1995).

This study reinforces research on other areas such as verbal and adverbials of Myanmar language, and attempts to standardize the language of Myanmar bloggers. Thus, the variation in adjective phrases of Myanmar English blogs is an important area to be investigated, not only grammatically but also socio-linguistically as their language production might be influenced, not only by their proficiency but also by other factors such as native language and the official language used in the country.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore structural differences of adjective phrases used by two Myanmar ethnic groups. In particular, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore the forms of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers
2. To identify the similarities and differences between adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers
3. To explore the functions of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers
4. To identify the similarities and differences between functions of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the forms of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers?
2. What are the similarities and differences between adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers?
3. What are the functions of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the functions of adjective phrases used by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The investigation on English language structures produced by Burmese and Rohingya communities provides results and findings that will be of great assistance in successful delivery of information. Specifically, this study focuses on Adjective Phrases so that the findings on variations of adjective phrases as well as their distinct features will garner better understanding of the content of blogs which use modifiers to describe

situations, themes and events and could solve the problem of miscommunication. By conducting the study on both forms and functions, variations are viewed from different dimensions as well as how their native languages influence these forms and functions in different ways.

Furthermore, understanding how Burmese users of English deviate from Standard English will be helpful in improving the teaching and learning of those structures so that the blogs and similar means of communication will become effective sources, not only for locals but also for international audiences, as the world is interested in what is happening in Myanmar. Ultimately, the findings of this study should be beneficial not only for bloggers and blogs, language instructors and decision makers, but also for the people of Myanmar. This is because the world, to a certain extent, will have easier understanding of the narratives on the conditions of the country as Myanmar needs better communication with the outside world. Assisting to promote communication with the world is akin to helping the country and its citizens as a whole as there is a lot of adjective phrase use and most of blogs use these phrases to clarify the incidents more vividly.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Adjective Phrases

An adjective is a phrase in which an adjective acts as a head. There are two types of adjective phrases: with complement and with modifier (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). Complements are prepositional phrases or subordinate clauses while modifiers are mostly adverbs. Determinatives, prepositional phrases and noun phrases are also used to modify adjectives.

In this study, adjective phrases used by Burmese and Rohingya bloggers will be investigated in terms of their forms and functions.

1.6.2 Blogging and Blogger

Blogging is a short form of “web logging” and is a form of micro-publishing. The purpose of a blog is to share personal stories, technology and events, to engage people in collaborative activities, discussions and debates. Many blogs have a large audience and there are blog clusters which are formed by linking fellow bloggers who have common interests (Williams & Jacobs, 2004).

In terms of language, blogs cover many kinds of linguistic activities such as journal and creative writing. It is creativity of a new discourse community and a unique form of communication (Crystal, 2006). It is a kind of language production based on simultaneously self-reflective thoughts which is presented publicly (Nilsson, 2003).

Bloggers are people who create blogs and share information through them. Bloggers may comprise an individual or a group who may be professionals or amateurs (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). In this study, language production of Rohingya and Burmese bloggers in English will be analysed.

1.6.3 Myanmar Ethnic Groups

Ethnic groups from Myanmar are derived from Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Barman and other East Asian ethnic groups. According to the 1958 census, there are 144 ethnic groups in Myanmar including Burmese and Rohingya. However, in 1962, Myanmar recognized only 135 ethnic groups as natives and citizens of the country, dropping nine ethnic groups including Rohingya from the list (Smith, 2004). In this study, language production of Rohingya and Burmese bloggers are analysed and discussed, thus their

language origins which are Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan are also considered in analysing the findings.

1.6.4 Myanmar English

Myanmar English is based on British English although some American usage is also popular. Phonetically, words are pronounced with aspirated consonants and non-rhotic as in “*bitamin*” for “*vitamin*”. There are also usage of words and phrases in slightly different contexts as in “*platform*” for “*pavement*”, and “*stage show*” for “*concert*”. Myanmar English continues to use Indian words such as *lakh* and *crore* (Win, 2003). In this study, Myanmar English produced by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers is analysed using content analysis.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THESIS

This study consists of five chapters which are introduction, literature review, methodology and procedures, the use of adjective phrases by Rohingya and Burmese bloggers and conclusion.

Chapter 1- Introduction- provides the background to the study, highlights the statement of the problem, the purpose, research objectives, research questions, significance of study, and theoretical framework.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review-provides analysis on Cross-Linguistic Influence, Burmese and Rohingya languages and functions of adjectives and adjective phrases.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology and Procedures- explains the procedures, instrumentation, and how the data is analysed.

Chapter 4- The Use of Adjective Phrases by Rohingya and Burmese Bloggers- this chapter presents research findings: the ensuing discussion.

Chapter 5- includes summary of findings, conclusion, implications of findings and recommendations.

The following chapter is a review of related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the reviewed literature on the following: blogs and bloggers, native language influence on the production of a second language, the nature of Myanmar and Rohingya languages and properties of English adjective phrases. The latest studies in this area since 2005 onwards are also discussed, but some older studies on Burmese language are included additionally because they are important studies to describe the nature of Burmese language.

2.2 BLOGS AND BLOGGERS

A blog (or a weblog) is a site on the Internet which allows information sharing and discussion on various topics. There are various services such as www.blogger.com and Word Press which allow people to create their own blogs. Bloggers create blogs and share information through them. Bloggers may be individuals or people working in groups and they could either be professionals or amateurs (Gardner & Birley, 2012). Blogs are established by politicians to share opinions and ideas. The language used in blogs is direct and interactive, which allows comments or feedback. Therefore, it is a kind of virtual communication which allows for monologs, dialogs and conversation. Most blogs consist of only texts while there are other blogs which focus on videos (vlogs), art, photographs and music (podcasts).

Since 2004, blogs have become increasingly popular among political analysts, news services and those who exchange opinions. Blogging is very popular now that a new blog is created almost every second (Blood, 2004). At the start of 2009, there were

200 million English blogs, and it is estimated that there are currently 450 million English blogs and one billion total number of blogs, including those written in languages other than English (David, 2015). In this study, political blogs written in English by Rohingya and Burmese individuals are our major concern.

2.3 CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE

Cross-linguistic influence concerns the significance of the first language in the acquisition of a second language (Odlin, 2003). This concept is based on Contrastive-Analysis Hypothesis which primarily focuses on the prediction of difficulties of the learners according to differences between the structure of native language and that of target language (Lado, 1957). Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) has two versions: the strong version which suggests the prediction of errors based on the difference between native language and target language and the weak version which focusses only on the significance of native language influence rather than prediction. Cross-linguistic influence emphasizes the influence of native language in terms of variations in phonology, syntax, lexical items, discourse and pragmatic interference (Barron, 2012).

According to Swan (2008), language distance which refers to similarities and differences between two languages has great impact on language transfer because languages with more common ground are easier to be transferred. For example, Spanish speaking learners can acquire English more easily than Finnish or Arabic speaking learners do. Guvercin, Tekkaya and Sungur (2010) discuss more specifically that the mother tongue influences acquisition of other languages and how people frame their thoughts, their word choices and delivery of speech. It is clear that our first language experience influences how we think, communicate and acquire grammar intuitively,

much like the target bloggers from Myanmar in this study who have two totally different mother tongues, namely, Burmese and Rohingya. However, according to De Angelis and Dewaele (2012), many of the world's learners can speak three or more languages and are multilingual, so it is difficult to evaluate the influence of a particular language in their English language production. As a result, it is essential to examine the background of participants when the studies on native language influence is carried out.

2.4 BURMESE AND ROHINGYA LANGUAGES

The languages of the 144 ethnic groups from Myanmar are derived from several language families such as Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic groups (Smith, 2004). Myanmar language which is also called Burmese is the official language of Myanmar. It is spoken by 32 million people as their first language and by another 10 million as a second language. It is included in southern Burmish branch of Sino-Tibetan language family and is a non-Sinitic language since it is not related to Chinese languages. Myanmar language is an analytic language, which means that it conveys grammatical relationship without using inflectional morphemes (Wheatley, 1987).

The Rohingya language is spoken by the Rohingya people of Arkan (Rakhine) state of Myanmar. It belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family. In the past, it had been written in Arabic, Urdu, Burmese and Hanifi scripts. Latin alphabets are now used in the writing system where some new alphabets have been invented for the sounds which are not present in the Latin sound system (Harvey, 1925).

The bloggers in this study are advanced users of the English language, but their language structure may still be influenced by their mother tongues. According to Perdue

(2000), language learners are more significantly affected by their native language in their later stages. Similarly, Klein (1986) argues that native language influence is an important factor at the advanced level rather than at the initial stages because most of the learners have similar results in their early stages, and the differences in their usage and structures are prominent as they become proficient in that language.

2.5 ADJECTIVES AND ADJECTIVE PHRASES IN BURMESE AND ROHINGYA LANGUAGES

As the study focuses on cross-linguistic influence, it is important to describe the adjectives and adjective phrases in Burmese and Rohingya for a clearer view of how the features of these languages influence English language production of their native speakers.

In Burmese, there are four types of adjectives:

- Qualification (*chawthaw mainkalay, (beautiful girl)*)
- Quantification (*mainkalay amyargyi, (many girls)*)
- Questioning (*bae mainkalay, (which girl)*)
- Referring (*di mainkalay, (this girl)*)

All of the above are at the attributive (pronominal) positions, and modify nouns. They become verbs at the predicate positions by removing suffixes. Adjectives are formed by adding suffix to nouns or verbs in the Burmese language. Nouns and verbs are major word classes while adjectives are used for additional meaning. There are also adjective phrases which are modified by other adjectives and adverbs. However, there is no adjective phrase with complements in Burmese language (Department of Burmese, 1995).