

# A Morphological Study of Words in Tai Language Spoken In Mong Kung Shan State of Myanmar

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## Abstract

The study is entitled "A Morphological Study of Words in Tai Language Spoken in Mong Kung Shan State of Myanmar. The objective of the study is 1) To find out the words used in Tai language spoken in Mong Kung, Shan State of Myanmar. 2) To analyze the word formation and word-class of Tai language spoken in Mong Kung, Shan State of Myanmar. The study is mixed-method in nature, interviewing 10 key informants from Wieng Nyuin Village in Mong Kung Shan State. The data collected included academic papers and theses, journals on this type of Tai language. The study documents and analyzes the Mong Kung Tai dialect, highlighting social influences on vocabulary, comparing it with other Tai languages, and contributing to the preservation and revitalization of Tai linguistic heritage.

The results of the research found that

1. Two types of morphemes—free and bound—are used in the study of Tai morphology in Mong Kung. These can be further classified into two categories: Basic forms consisting of two types: First, monosyllabic; then, polysyllabic.

2. Compound forms comprise four types of compounds, such as (1) Word Classes compound (2) Superordinate -subordinate Compound (3) Class Term Compound (4) Semantic Compound.

3. The word-classes of Tai as a part of speech that is considered to be noun, pronoun, adjectives, numerals, verb, adverb, prepositions, conjunction, interjection.

**Keywords:** Morphological Study; Word-Formation; Word-Class; Tai Language Spoken in Mong Kung

## Introduction

What is word? when communicating verbally or in writing, words are crucial. Without using words. Due to a sentence, communication is practically impossible. We can communicate effectively when a set of words is grammatically sound and appropriate in terms of semantics. Life might not exist without communication. The words we use when we speak are so crucial that we must choose them carefully. Before speaking or writing, it's necessary to think about our diction or word choice. When speaking or writing, we attempt to avoid using language that could be offensive to others.

For a linguistic the word is a very important, fundamental unit. Not only is it the chief subject-matter of lexicology, but it is dependent on phonology for the analysis of its sound-structure, and on syntax for the delimitation of its status in more complex configurations.

There are many ways to view words. If their internal structure is examined, they can be divided into simple and complex words. Simple words are those that cannot be divided further. Because it cannot be divided, the word “water” is an example of a basic word. Complex words, on the other hand, are ones that can be further divided. For instance, the word “watered” is complex because it can be further divided into the segment “water” and “{-ed}” as a bound morpheme.

In terms of their class, words can be divided into content and structural words, which together make up the parts of speech. Noun, verb, adjective, and adverb are examples of content words. Conjunctions, prepositions, articles, numerals, pronouns, and interjections are examples of structural terms.

In linguistics, Morphology is the field of study that examines the formation of words. Word forms and their relationships to other words in the same language are the subjects of morphology, which is the study of linguistic morphology. From the formation of new lexical items to the expression of grammatical structure, formal variations between words serve a range of functions. Depending on the function a specific formation serves in grammar, there are various forms of morphology. The most fundamental distinction is between word construction and inflection.

For instance, the word employee in the English language is made up of the verb employ and the suffix -ee, the element un-, which is attached to the adjective unhappy, can be used to evaluate how it differs from the word happy. That is capable of breaking down complex words into their smallest meaningful units. Morphemes are the name for these units. In contrast to free morphemes, which do occur on their own, these morphemes are known as bound morphemes. They also employ a word-formation rule. Word-formation is the process of creating a new word. It calls for the creation of brand-new lexemes. Derivation, compounding, blending, acronyms, and many more are examples of these.

One of the issues in morphology is word formation, which includes how new words are created in languages around the world and how word forms change based on how they are used in sentences. This guideline of language is always used for this reason in mass articles like documentary, academic, and thesis writing.

An academic who is also researching the Tai language of Mong Kung is examining the language spoken there. It is located geographically in the southern Shan State of Myanmar. The way that the morphology of Tai words and sentences relates to Tai communication and how the changes in the Tai language influence the younger and older generations in distinct ways.



Misunderstandings and failures in communication can result from linguistic disparities. Because of the peculiar way that younger people communicate, parents often complain about it.

During public speaking, young adults may use a different way of coming up with words. Language differences can lead to misunderstandings and confusion among users from different generations who are not familiar with Netspeak, which includes new vocabulary, spelling modifications, symbols, and emotions.

The Tai language family includes the Tonal Tai language, which is commonly referred to as Tai. When referring to oneself as "Tai," this group of people usually include the name of their town or neighborhood group. Every Tai person in Shan State identifies as Tai. Others, like as the Burmese, refer to them as "Shan." The origin of both the term "Siam," which refers to Thai people in Thailand, and the word "Shan's" is unknown.

In this case, the shape analysis of new words is of great interest to the researcher. notably in the media, which uses a lot of new vocabulary. The author then plans to use morphological research on word construction conventions and choose terms from the Tai language that focus on word development. The purpose of this study is to improve word comprehension so that people can grasp new terms when they are used. This study not only analyzes words but also aims to identify and characterize the rules that individuals follow when they are producing them.

This research will analyze the word formation process, and the production of new words, based on the information in the aforementioned fact. The research will also examine how words are formed in the Tai language. This study will use the dictionary to analyze the data and display the outcomes of the word development process. The internal structure or shape of words is the focus of the linguistic field of morphology. So, structure morphological will be used to evaluate this research.

As state above, the focus of this research is on how words are formed in the fields of morphology. The word formation process will be examined, including compounding, and the development of new words. The words used in the Tai language are the study's objects.

## Objectives of the Research

1. To find out the words used in Tai language spoken in Mong Kung, Shan State of Myanmar.
2. To analyze the word formation and word-class of Tai language spoken in Mong Kung, Shan State of Myanmar.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This research is both qualitative and quantitative research procedures. Thus, the way of collecting data mainly will focus on the result of making a survey by designing questionnaire, interviewing adults and students. And the focus of this research is on how words are formed in

the fields of morphology. The word formation process will be examined, including compounding, and development of new words. To examine the Tai language's word classes—such as noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection. The words used in the Tai language are the study's objects.

In this study, the researcher will make questionnaires to 140 persons and interview questions using a modern usage of Tai and sources will study through such as books, thesis, journal, articles, and will make the in-depth interview to 10 persons who can speak Tai clearly with perfect articulators of Tai morphemes and word-formations, word classes.

### **Population and Sample**

The total population comprised of 220 persons from Weing Nyun Village, which is situated in Mong Kung Township, Shan State, Myanmar. The quantitative research used the questionnaires and testing as tools in the area of Weing Nyun Village, focused on 140 people as a sample size for study based on a table for determining sample size for a given population. The researcher selected only ten members of the group to participate in in-depth interviews for the qualitative data in the study, who are directly involved in this research in order to get their opinions and suggestions.

### **Research Tools**

There are two main research tools used for this study namely; questionnaire, and testing lexical words.

#### **Interview**

The researcher aims to interview 10 people directly on their opinion and suggestions related to this study.

#### **Questionnaire**

For the questionnaires were used for this study. It was divided into two parts: Part 1. General background information (age, gender, status, native, occupation. Part 2. Testing Tai language's lexical words.

### **Data Collection**

A study of word formation in Tai is gathering by researcher from contemporary Tai and English usage, including books, academic books, dictionaries (English to Tai), thesis, documentaries, articles, journals, and web research.

The purpose of the interview will be to gather data of information from informants. One by one or groups, they are interviewed or engaged in face-to-face dialogue. The researcher will send a letter introducing themselves, outlining their research question and goal, to the surveys that provided the data from this study.

Finally, find the results from the survey papers for further discussion and discover solutions to the issues posed by the use of new words in Tai.

### **Data Analysis**

The research study's data analysis was presented and examined with examples for each term and category as follows: The classification of morphology was based on word-formation,

word-classes, and morpheme kinds. The guidelines of the literature review were used to examine each form of morphological investigation of spoken Tai dialect words.

## Results of Research

The questionnaire's first section covered background information and some personal details about the participants. This section provided general information on the respondents, including their address, age, status, native language, occupation, and general information. The researcher analyzed the data using the frequency and percentage statistical values found in tables 4.1-4.5.

To get the interviewees to feel comfortable and provide rich information, the researcher performed a conversational interview with them.

**Table 1:** Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	62	44.29%
Female	78	55.71%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 presents the frequency analysis of the data for gender. The respondents were male about 62 (44.29%) and 78 (55.71%) of respondents were female. Therefore, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents were female.

**Table 2:** Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15 to 20 years old	78	55.71%
21 to 30 years old	37	26.43%
31 to 40 years old	15	10.71%
Over 40 years old	10	7.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 presents the frequency analysis of the data for ages. The respondents were 15 to 20 years old about 78 (55.71%) and 21 to 30 years old about 37 (26.43%) and 31 to 40 years old about 15 (10.71%) and over 40 years old (7.14%) respondents. Therefore, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents were totally 100%.

**Table 3:** Status of the Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	84	60.00%
Married	56	40.00%
Divorced	01	00.51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 presents the frequency analysis of the data for status. The respondents were single about 84 (60.00%) and married 56 (40.00%) and divorced 01

(00.51%) of respondents. Therefore, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents.

**Table 4:** Native Language of the Respondents

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Tai	140	100%
Burmese	0	0%
China	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 presents the frequency analysis of the data for languages. The respondents were Tai about 140 (100%) and there was no respondent other specify Burmese and China. Therefore, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents 140 were Tai majority of respondents.

**Table 5:** Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	82	58.57%
Farmer	58	41.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 Occupation of the Respondents presents the frequency analysis of the data for career. The respondents were student about 82 (58.57%) and farmer was about 58 (41.43%) of respondents. Therefore, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents 82 were student majority of respondents.

### The Result of the Testing of Tai language’s Lexical Words

The results of testing lexical words in the Tai language are displayed in the following 11 categories. The first role in the word lists indicates the quantity of the terms, while the second role displays the English words. Nevertheless, by contrasting words that are often used and those that are not often used, another section of the table discusses the indicator of lexical words used by Tai people in the Weing Nyuin Village, Mong Kung Shan State. The researcher disbursed the test for respondents from one of example of in (11) categories of the commonly used Tai language as follows:

**Table 6: (Category-1) Words List of Religions in (30-Words)**

No	Words in English	Words in Tai	Occurrence	
			Often Used	Not Often Used
1	Buddhist	ulef:Qmof:ykwf. /kon <sup>3</sup> jow <sup>3</sup> bud <sup>4</sup> /	✓	
2	Christian	Qmof:cldwf. /jow <sup>3</sup> kha <sup>5</sup> rit <sup>4</sup> /		✗
3	Muslim	Qmof:rl,Ovdrf, /jow <sup>3</sup> mu <sup>2</sup> sa <sup>5</sup> lim <sup>2</sup> /		✗
4	Homage	vgif;eyf.xdkof /long <sup>1</sup> nup <sup>4</sup> theau <sup>5</sup> /	✓	

No	Words in English		Words in Tai	Occurrence	
				Often Used	Not Often Used
5	Buddha	ykwf.x	/bud <sup>4</sup> dha <sup>4</sup> /	✓	
6	Dhamma	xrf,r	/dha <sup>2</sup> ma <sup>4</sup> /	✓	
7	Sangha	Oif,c	/saŋ <sup>2</sup> kha <sup>4</sup> /	✓	
8	Abbot	rkefQof;	/mon <sup>5</sup> jao <sup>1</sup> /	✓	
9	Monk	rkefQmif:	/mon <sup>5</sup> jaŋ <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
10	Novice	Qof;Omif,	/jao <sup>1</sup> saŋ <sup>2</sup> /	✓	
11	Acolyte	uyf.yD,bj.	/kup <sup>4</sup> pi <sup>2</sup> ya <sup>4</sup> /	✓	
12	Hermit	Qof;laO:	/jao <sup>1</sup> ra <sup>4</sup> se <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
13	Robe	Omif,umef:	/saŋ <sup>2</sup> karn <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
14	Nun	Qof;cmof	/jao <sup>1</sup> khow <sup>5</sup> /	✓	
15	Yogi	abj:uD,	/yo <sup>3</sup> ki <sup>2</sup> /	✓	
16	Temple	owf.oh;Tzj:	/wat <sup>4</sup> wai <sup>1</sup> phra: <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
17	Monastery	owf.rkefQof;	/wat <sup>4</sup> mon <sup>5</sup> jao <sup>1</sup> /	✓	
18	Church	owf.cldwf.	/wat <sup>4</sup> kha <sup>4</sup> rit <sup>4</sup> /		✗
19	Mosque	owf.rl,Ovdrf,	/wat <sup>4</sup> mu <sup>2</sup> sa <sup>4</sup> lim <sup>2</sup> /		✗
20	Pagoda	ugif:rl:	/kong <sup>3</sup> mu <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
21	Buddha image	pkef,pmif;Tzj:	/hon <sup>2</sup> haŋ <sup>1</sup> phra: <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
22	Karma	umrf,	/karm <sup>2</sup> /	✓	
23	Good deed	wmif:vDukOlof,	/taŋ <sup>3</sup> li <sup>5</sup> ku <sup>4</sup> so <sup>2</sup> /	✓	
24	Vice	umefphm.umefr dluf;	/kan <sup>5</sup> hai <sup>4</sup> meauk <sup>1</sup> /	✓	
25	Merit	umefvDukOlof,	/kan <sup>5</sup> li <sup>5</sup> ku <sup>4</sup> so <sup>2</sup> /	✓	
26	Demerit	umeftrf,vD	/kan <sup>5</sup> aum <sup>2</sup> li <sup>5</sup> /	✓	
27	Five precepts	Odefpj;OAef;	/sin <sup>5</sup> ha <sup>1</sup> sen <sup>1</sup> /	✓	
28	Sabbath Day	oef:Odef	/wan <sup>3</sup> sin <sup>5</sup> /	✓	
29	Full moon day	vdlefrlef:	/learn <sup>5</sup> mon <sup>3</sup> /	✓	
30	Holy day	oef:b[,oef:vlif	/wan <sup>3</sup> yai <sup>2</sup> wan <sup>3</sup> loŋ <sup>5</sup> /	✓	

The above table showed the key informants list of 30 words related to religion. The phrase "Christian and Muslim, Church and Mosque" appears in numbers 2, 3, 18, and 19 of the above table. In Weing Nyuin Village, all of the villagers were Buddhist, hence they were neither Christian nor Muslim. Additionally, they not often used the words in their daily lives because they lack a church and a mosque.

In Mong Kung, there are only Tai, Pa-O and Pa-long in all the villages outside the township. Most of them are Buddhists.

## Conclusion and Discussion

In the study of Tai morphology, this research had collected the research works concerned information, which related to the study as follows:

One of the important components of the thesis is discussion; therefore, presenting the morphological examination of words in the Tai language spoken in Mong Kung, Shan State, Myanmar. In this study, the researcher analyzed the word system, including morphemes, word formation, and word class. There are various fascinating morphological elements to investigate in future research.

According to the findings of research done by Indacakka (2020), he mentioned that morpheme refers to the study of monomorphemic and polymorphemic forms such as composites. There are prefix-derived forms, suffix-derived forms, reduplicated forms, and rhymed forms. Tai Long compound words are classified into four types: nominalization compound, class term compound, word class compound, and semantic compound. Tai Long's word classes include nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numbers, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunction, interjection, and final particles.

The other researcher, Agganyana (2018), investigated the morphology of the Tai language spoken in Loilem province, Shan State, Myanmar. The investigation of his idea concerning the word-formation of Tai language spoken in Loilem province Shan State, as well as the word-class morphology of Tai language in Loilem province Shan State, Myanmar.

The researcher Aggasena (2009) has published about Shan's phonology and morphology; in the next chapters, he goes into word classes and other Shan-specific characteristics, such as appropriate couplets, phonetic couples, and idiomatic constructions. These are Shan's morphological patterns, or methods of word formation.

## New Body of Knowledge

For the new knowledge as obtained from the research titled "A morphological study of words in Tai language spoken in Mong Kung Shan State of Myanmar" as related to summary on how the variation of any language used in their daily life. So, this study contributes new body of knowledge in the field of Tai linguistics and dialectology in the following ways:

**1. Lexical Documentation of a Less-Studied Tai Dialect:** The research presents a comprehensive collection and categorization of lexical items used in the Tai dialect spoken in Moug Kung, Shan State, Myanmar, which has previously received limited scholarly attention.

**2. Sociolinguistic Insights into Lexical Variation:** The findings reveal how social factors such as age, occupation, and education level influence word usage and lexical choices among Tai speakers in the region.

**3. Comparative Linguistic Perspective:** The study provides comparative analysis between the Moug Kung Tai dialect and other Tai varieties (e.g., Thai, Lao, Shan), contributing to the broader understanding of lexical divergence and convergence in Tai languages.

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**4. Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage:** By recording and analyzing local vocabulary, the study aids in the preservation of the linguistic heritage of Tai ethnic communities in Myanmar, aligning with global efforts in safeguarding minority languages. The lexical database and analytical framework developed in this study can serve as a foundation for future research in areas such as historical linguistics, phonology, language contact, and language revitalization in Tai-speaking regions.

The research plays a crucial role in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. By systematically documenting and analyzing local vocabulary, the study not only adds to academic linguistic knowledge but also provides a resource for language revitalization and education within the Tai-speaking community in Myanmar. The findings can be integrated into community-based language teaching and cultural programs aimed at maintaining the Tai identity in an increasingly globalized world.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that lexical data from under-researched dialects such as Moug Kung Tai can yield valuable insights into linguistic diversity, sociocultural dynamics, and language preservation efforts. It also establishes a foundation for future research in Tai dialectology and comparative linguistics that can be presented as follow:



### Suggestions of research

This study focuses on the Shan State Union of Myanmar's Tai morphological system. For this reason, it is worthwhile to examine the morphology of morphemes, word formation, and word-classes that deal with the Tai's full properties.

1. To support individuals and students learning the morphemes of the Tai dialect.
2. To give Tai dialect learners more examples of compound words.
3. Studying Tai dialect words and aspects of speech is very beneficial for understanding Tai. Therefore, it makes sense to contrast and compare Tai's recent texts.

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